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# The BOSS

J. W. Mc CONAUGHY  
&  
EDWARD SHELDON

—

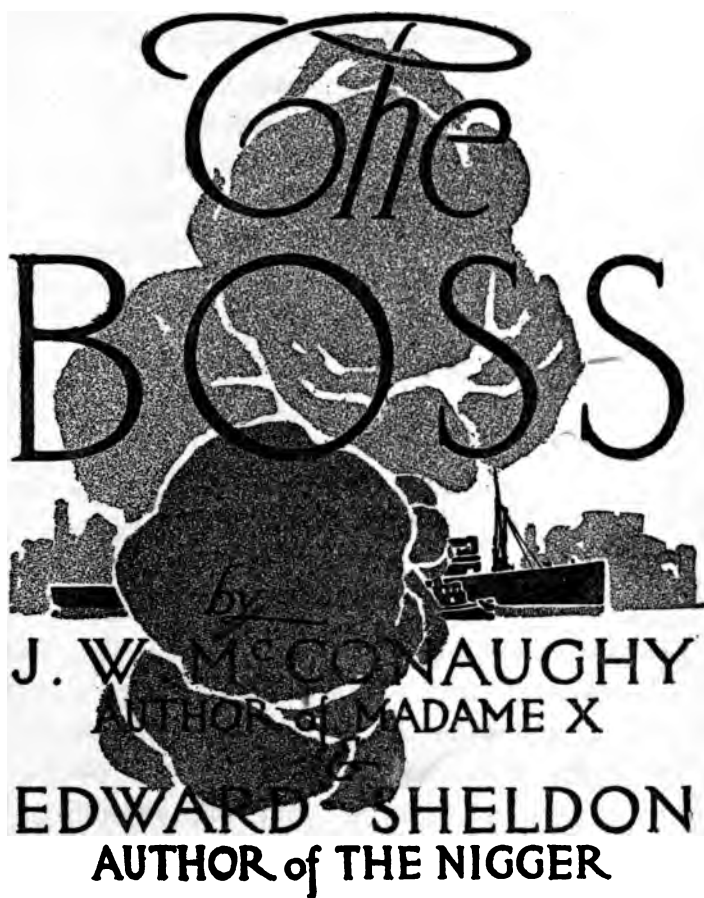
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# THE BOSS

## CHAPTER I

### THE FIGHT IN THE DIP OF DEATH

**I**T stood at the corner of Water Street and Clancy's Alley: The Dip of Death.

How it got its sinister name no one ever knew. But both the name and the place fitted the entrance to Clancy's Alley, to which the dive more properly belonged than to the busy, noisy thoroughfare that skirted the river. Here giant men and giant elevators toiled ceaselessly to stem the mighty billows of golden wheat that rolled in from the great prairies of the West. Whalebacks in endless succession bumped against the piling of the river front and their sirens called hoarsely to be relieved of the burden of grain that sank them to the water's edge. Then the clanking of mighty chains and wheels, the shrieking of whistles, the hoarse swearing of the "scoopers," the puffing and gasping of the switch-engines as they struggled up and down the street with heavy strings of cars merged into the blood-tingling roar which is the voice of Industry.

This for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four. And sometimes, indeed, for days and nights on end without a breath when the rising flood of grain threatened to overwhelm the channels built to control it.

On these nights the proprietor of the Dip of Death forgot the excise laws. The grimy, sweaty "scoopers" crept out of the glare of the arc-lights and open furnace doors, along the shadowy walls of the elevators that seemed to thrust their dim heads up into the misty stars, and slipped into the dive for an enormous "scuttle" of lager-and-ale or a large and poisonous drink of whiskey.

Water Street was an unlovely place to the eye of an artist but it was redeemed by its rugged strength, its tireless purpose. And its dirt was the honest dirt of toil. But this could not be said for the noisome, shameful little ditch that opened into it. Clancy's Alley was ugly and filthy without apology.

It matters not what particular community hid the shame of Clancy's Alley deep in the squalid rabbit-warrens of its water-front. Every boss-ridden, morally inert American city has its plague spots. True, they are never allowed to abut upon the parks or the River-

## IN THE DIP OF DEATH 11

side Drives or Michigan Avenues, for we love to talk of the City Beautiful and civic enlightenment, and were the Clancy's Alleys where we must always look upon them, the obtrusive fact might have a depressing effect on attractive conversation. They are invariably pushed out to the edge or into the dark corners where we can forget them, much as the sloven housewife sweeps the dust into a corner and puts a chair in front of it to receive her visitors. And like the dust in the dark corners they breed diseases and these diseases are the viciousness and crime that make boss-rule possible.

Clancy's Alley was less than two hundred yards long and possibly twenty feet wide from house to house. The houses were tumble-down, brick and frame, three and four stories in height. These had once been warehouses but had been transformed into tenements by the simple process of cutting up the floors with light wooden partitions and tacking flimsy fire-escapes on to the front. These last were now rust-eaten to the point of disintegration and choked at every floor with refuse and such household stores as were not in constant use.

Heaped-up garbage cans all but blocked the



narrow sidewalks. Sometime back in the more remote history of the city the Alley had been paved with rough cobblestones, but it had never been repaired. And, of course, the street-cleaning department had no time to waste on such a God-forsaken rat-hole. The rainwater stood in pools in the street and on the sidewalks. Old newspapers, table-refuse and worse things fell into these pools and formed a horrible slush that gave off odors of amazing strength and individuality.

The sunlight came in only for a short time about noon and seemed anxious to get away. The residents—if they can be given so pretentious a description—were mainly the families of “scoopers” who worked on the river-front and some few women who did odd jobs of all sorts and eked out a bare existence with such pitiful wage as shame would bring in the neighborhood of Clancy’s Alley.

Household duties took up but little of the time of the women of the Alley. They spent a large part of the day leaning, frowsy and half-clad, out of the windows of their miserable apartments, gossiping with neighbors above or below or in the windows opposite and crying out shrill threats to their ragged children who

## IN THE DIP OF DEATH 13

played among the garbage cans beneath and whose skins showed an unhealthy white—when visible through the encrusted grime.

This was Clancy's Alley. And it is probably still there for the City Beautiful develops slowly in the abodes of the miserable. There were many places little better, in the same part of the city but Clancy's Alley was the vilest of them all.

It was one hot night in late summer that Michael R. Regan, proprietor of the Dip of Death, awoke from a train of happy reflections as he leaned his elbow on the far end of the bar and began to think of closing for the night. It had been a day of tense suspense—politically and meteorologically. But in both phases it was now ended. The last official count from every precinct was in and he knew that his years of scheming and intriguing had borne fruit. He was leader of the Fourth Ward. Kelly was down and out at last. "Shindy Mike," as the "scoopers" called him, was Boss of the "Fourth." In his hands was the crowbar with which he would pry power and wealth out of the heart of the city.

He looked about him in the small, triangular, smoke-blackened brothel that had been his

since his father's death and reflected that he would soon now be able to put another in there. He would hunt bigger game. Yet he liked the place. Even to the lunch-counter which ran along the wall on the long side of the triangle, opposite the door, it typified the man who owned it. At first glance you would have supposed there was food enough for a regiment. Inspection showed that it was made up of heaping platters of raw cabbage leaves, cheap, raw green peppers, a double handful of fly-specked cubes of stale cheese, and a big dish of old and pithy radishes, another of fragmentary crackers and a smaller platter with a few scattered slices of heat-dried sausage. Like its owner it promised everything and yielded nothing.

The saloon was two steps below the level of the street—a fact that possibly suggested the “dip” part of its disquieting name. The bar, with the mirror and bottles behind it, ran along the left-hand side as you entered. The ceiling was low and at night the only illumination was the light of a smoky gas-globe that resembled in appearance and efficiency an expiring arc-light. Leaving a five-foot passage in front of the bar, there was still room for half-a-dozen

## IN THE DIP OF DEATH 15

small tables scattered up toward the apex of the triangle. The floor—for motives of economy—was of small, hard tiles. These alone would stand the pounding grind of the massive hob-nails.

In a twentieth-century civilization it rivaled the Fircone of Villon's debauches as the Alley on which it opened was the equal of the worst court in the Paris of the Valois.

It had been a stifling day. The city had lain still and breathless, sweltering in the heat. Only those citizens were active who made it their business to see that enough votes were cast at the primaries to meet their needs. Regan's customers had drunk his health to their fill and had departed in peace. The one unpleasant incident had been adjusted without violence. Regan's night bartender had imbibed so much enthusiasm over the victory that by eleven o'clock he had become obsessed with the idea that there was no key on the cash-register but the one marked, "35." Whether the bill for the drinks were fifteen cents or fifty it was all one to the Governor—so-called because he bore the name of a recent executive. He punched the "35" key until two "scoopers"

tried to climb over the bar. Then Regan interfered, learned the cause of the trouble and kicked the Governor out, with the caution to be on time the next night.

The others gradually drifted away and there was no more excitement until the Two Kerry Men, drivers for the Griswold Company, came in and engaged the Roofer and Ferry-boat, two of Regan's trustiest henchmen, in a game of euchre. The Two Kerry Men had not been "over" very long and they were practically invincible at euchre because of their ability to tell each other the strength of their hands in an uncouth Urse jargon. This was generally known and accepted as an unavoidable handicap in playing against the Two Kerry Men but they added a new trick that night which stirred the Roofer to break up the game.

He had paid no attention to the fact that one or the other occasionally sang as if to himself the following little couplet:

"Oh, me mother came from Kerry and me  
father from Tyrone,  
And they was the finest couple that ever yet  
was known."

It was not until he and Ferry-boat had lost several games that he discovered that "the

finest couple" were the two bowers. The song indicated that the minstrel had both of them in his hand at the time. This was serious for a moment but the quartet at last fronted up to the bar with hearts free of rancor. After two drinks the Kerry Men were for sitting down again but Regan interfered and ushered them out.

"Never let them 'scoopers' sit down after they get a couple of balls into 'em," he told "Porky" McCoy, his chief lieutenant, "'Cause if y' do they'll go dead in th' chairs and you can't rouse 'em with a blackjack."

The Roofer and Ferry-boat promptly sought chairs and in a few minutes their snores were added to, or rather had absorbed, the other noises of the night. "Porky" McCoy dozed in a seat by the cold stove within easy arm's reach of his chief's favorite position at the end of the bar. He did not drink but his hands ached with stuffing ballots into boxes and his legs and back were sore with the effort of dragging many drunken "scoopers" to the polls. It had been a great day.

Without, the city lay gasping in the hot darkness. But about midnight a breeze that had come from the far-off pines and drunk in

the cool purity of the great inland sea over which it crept, stole between the long rows of houses. The restless sighed and slept. A stray puff of the cool air hesitated at the entrance of the Alley, but that day it had fairly outdone itself in the production of appalling odors and the breeze shrank back and passed on.

Regan gently mopped the rough bar and caught a splinter under a blunt, horny nail from a ragged crack that ran lengthwise through the wood. He extracted it, gazed a moment at the thick, stubby fingers and then at the balled fist. "Balled" as applied to a fist is usually inaccurate description. A fist is generally an angular bunch of loose-hung bones. Once in ten thousand there is a man whose fist forms an almost perfect sphere and be his business promoting or pugilism, man-curing or man-killing, banking or brewing, you will find him near the top of it.

And unless you are particularly able yourself it is well to avoid trouble with him. For the swing of his arm is the sweep of a broken side-rod and the blow of his fist is the crushing smash of the sledge.

Regan was called "Shindy Mike" and a so-

## IN THE DIP OF DEATH 19

briquet of that character in "the Fourth" where shindies were the civic pastime was not given unless fully earned. He was a trifle above middle height—broad and muscular. His arms were short and powerful. His hair was light and his eyes light blue—the fighting blue. He had the large mouth and strongly marked features of that Irish type which in later years becomes moon-faced. But he was now not yet thirty.

As he stood behind the bar and studied his tried fist he was wondering why Kelly and his crowd had not tried to "start something." He had not heard a word from the camp of the enemy, directly or indirectly, since the polls were closed. This was ominous. It was not like Kelly to take a beating quietly.

One of the swing doors was pushed open far enough to admit the helmet and head of a grizzled policeman.

"Cheese, Mike!" he called sharply. "Look at the clock!"

Regan glanced at the clock above the stove. It was just one.

"All right, Ed," he said, moving toward the foot of the bar, "Have a snifter before I close?"

"Too late." And the head disappeared.



While Regan was removing the apron he had donned to protect his flashy gray trousers, McCoy emptied the saloon. This was accomplished with a minimum of effort. He pushed the Roofer's chair over and the noise of the fall woke Ferry-boat; whereupon both departed, yawning.

Regan had washed his hands in the little toilet-room and was putting the final touches to the adjustment of a large diamond stud in his lavender shirt bosom when he heard the sound of many footsteps at the bar. He knew who it was before he opened the door and stepped out, and he made a mental memorandum to kick himself severely after it should be all over for not locking his doors at once.

With a sharp nod and a "Hi yu!" he took in the situation and chose his ground. The toilet-room door stood at the open end of the bar. To get to it one must pass between that end of the bar and the stove—a five-foot opening into a little square of clear space. "Porky" McCoy stood by the stove and a little back of it, his hands behind him. Regan stood at the end of the bar. Thus they could be attacked only on their front unless one of the enemy should vault the bar higher up and advancing behind it, partially turn their right flank.

## IN THE DIP OF DEATH 21

Some seven or eight men were lined up as if to order drinks. Regan and McCoy knew all of them. Almost touching Regan's left elbow with his right as he leaned on the bar across the corner was the Big Stiff, one of Kelly's most notorious "strong-arm men." Next to the Big Stiff was Paddy the Horse, hero of a score of bar-room battles. Kelly himself, furtive-eyed and cat-like, was next. Then came Mickey the Rube and several others of the same stripe. The odds of battle were heavy and even if he won Regan could hardly avoid arrest for violation of the excise laws—and there were several judges who owed their election to Kelly.

Within easy reach of Regan's right hand were the bottles on the back-bar, any one of which swung by a vigorous arm against the frontal bone of an adversary would do almost as much damage as if the contents had been poured down his throat. Just back of him on a little cider keg was the heavy beer-mallet, but the instinct of a general told him that Porky had his eye on that. With both hands resting lightly on the edge of the bar he waited without any sign of nervousness.

"Give us a drink, Mickey," said Kelly with what was meant for a smile. "We thought

we'd drop in and shake hands wid y'u before y'u closed."

Regan threw a quick cool glance at the clock.

"Can't do it, Kel," he replied calmly; and yawned. "I was just closin' when you come in."

Each side knew that the other side knew that there was to be a fight, but there are amenities, even in the Fourth Ward. There was a moment's tense silence. Then Kelly spoke with a faint sneer:

"Y'u don't mind breakin' election laws but you ain't game to break the booze laws, eh? Think you're gonna get by with this stuff to-day?"

Regan looked at the deposed chieftain with an insolent grin, but all his watchfulness was centered on the left arm of the Big Stiff.

"Looks as if I could break a bunk leader now and then, don't it?"

There was another silence of a few seconds and a general stiffening of the line along the bar. The Big Stiff edged away a few inches. The movement was all but imperceptible. He was measuring the distance for the blow.

"I've knowed a lot of fresh guys to get their

## IN THE DIP OF DEATH 23

jawrs broke," remarked Paddy the Horse, looking straight before him into the mirror. The next instant the Big Stiff's great left fist leaped out for Regan's jaw and the four men nearest behind him rushed for the line of battle between the stove and the end of the bar.

Regan's right arm shot up and the blow glanced over his head. At the same moment he put the weight of his body into his right foot in a terrific kick. The aim was perfect. The heavy sole of his shoe struck exactly in the indentation at the top of the shin-bone of the Big Stiff's right leg. The knee cap was ripped from the gripping tendons half-way up the thigh.

McCoy seized the mallet and glided behind his chief into the shelter of the bar. With a scream of agony the Big Stiff dropped writhing to the floor but before Regan could recover his balance a glancing blow from the brass-guarded knuckles of the Horse opened a two-inch gash over his left eye. He pressed in for another and final blow but Regan's left fist darted out and up for the jaw. There was a ringing crack as bone met bone and the Horse went down on his back, the base of his skull

striking the tiled floor with the hollow thump of a falling pumpkin.

Kelly ducked a blow from Porky's mallet and drove his right fist with terrific force against Regan's mouth. Mike reeled back among the bottles and a sturdy thug with a piece of one ear bitten out scrambled upon the upper end of the bar. Before he could straighten up, McCoy's mallet crashed against his chin. The bone folded in like wet pasteboard and he dropped without a sound to the floor. A spittoon whizzed by Porky's head and smashed into the mirror. He turned just in time to get another one full on the forehead and he sank, in a heap, behind the bar.

Regan's right hand closed on the neck of a bottle as he threw it out to save himself and, lurching forward, he brought the heavy glass full against Kelly's head. The bottle was shattered and the leader of the enemy staggered into the stove. Another bottle met the rush of the Rube who had disposed of Porky and he dropped across a table. Kelly came back to the attack, though he could not raise his arms. With his remaining strength Regan brought a third bottle down on the defenseless head. Kelly crumpled to the floor. The only

## IN THE DIP OF DEATH 25

two unhurt fled with the fall of their leader.

It was all over. It had lasted ten seconds.

The grizzled policeman hurled himself through the door, night-stick in hand.

"Hell! Regan! What's loose?" he exclaimed.

Chairs and tables were overturned. The floor was slippery with blood and whiskey, covered with broken glass and strewn with still forms. Where the mirror had been was a blank expanse of rough wood with a few jagged points of looking-glass jutting out from the frame. The back bar was a wreck of crushed bottles and glasses. The Big Stiff writhed and groaned on the floor by the stove.

Swaying slightly on his feet, his right hand supporting him, Regan stood at the end of the bar. He was half-blinded with blood and half-stunned with blows. The crimson streams had run down his cheeks and chin and dripped on his shirt-front and coat and through it the diamond gleamed evilly.

"I'm the Boss of the Fourth," he said thickly.

And he looked down at Kelly's crushed head and licked his torn lips.

## CHAPTER II

EMILY GRISWOLD

**I**N a big house, set in a small park, far removed from Clancy's Alley and its vice and squalor, lived the Griswolds. Here they had been born, lived and died for generations. They were leaders of "the old families"—a reigning dynasty in a social order to which neither money nor brains necessarily admitted the possessor. Money, a certain amount, was necessary and brains were necessary if one would lead, but these were mere details. You either "belonged" or you did not and the decree—once handed down in a specific case—was as immutable as the law of gravity.

Until Emily returned from college—many years after Regan had won the leadership of the Fourth Ward—the house of Griswold had been without a mistress. She was the younger of two children and the mother barely had strength to kiss her once before she died and left the care of the tiny girl to the father and brother.

After his wife's death James Griswold had sought forgetfulness in work and had thrown himself into business with such feverish energy that in a few years he had won control of the great grain-contracting business of the lake-port where they lived. Donald, seven years older than his sister, was his father's right hand. He was alert and aggressive—a master of the business. Griswold and Company were a power in the city.

Emily was the boast of her father and her brother until she returned from college. From college she brought back ideas and plans which her father tolerated, but which won numberless sarcastic and wrathful speeches from her brother.

Without a mother's daily counsel and guidance, Emily's religious training had not been of the most thorough kind. She was Episcopalian because that was the family tradition and until she went away to school she had not given the matter a great deal of thought. But she had naturally a keen, clean mind and at college she learned many things that were not in the curriculum.

Here they dealt in theories. She was far from the world itself. She studied and the



study induced thought. As she looked out at the world from her school eyrie it seemed a small place—made so in the Divine Scheme that men might know each other and be brothers. The plush-lined faith of her fathers fell away from her. The religion she embraced in her heart did not admit of doctrine. Its charity was untainted by creed.

Like many another young woman she came back to her home, afire with enthusiasm, her mind filled with splendid theories and half-baked plans for making the theories realities. Yearly they come from the schools and go earnestly to work. Then suspicion and distrust, sullen brutishness and sickening ingratitude do their work. The fire of enthusiasm dies away. An older call comes more strongly as discouragement grows and they turn away to Love and a Home.

Yet, always, there are a few who cannot be daunted and in the souls of these the flame but dies down to the glow of changeless purpose. The ranks grow from year to year. Go into the Clancy's Alleys of any city and you will sometimes come upon a severe but well-built house with lonely flowers struggling for life in window-boxes. Within, in the cool, half-dark-

ened rooms you will find everywhere—in pictures, furniture and books—that which will show this to be the home of refinement. And here you will meet them, the undaunted, grave-eyed, gentle-voiced women who have steeled themselves to sacrifice their birthright—who love many babies but may not love their own; and who, to the end, give the gold of their hearts and the toil of their hands to them that need it—and want it not.

This was the life that Emily Griswold had chosen. The advice of her father, the biting comments of her brother and the appeals of society were powerless to move her. She made new friends and grew with them in heart and soul and mind. With them she worked hard, striving to lift a burden from the breaking shoulders, holding out a hand to a staggering brother or sister, fighting patiently, tirelessly and with little success against ignorance, oppression and vice.

She climbed countless flights of “fireproof” stairs that had never seen a ray of God’s sunlight since the roof was built above them. She washed little children who had never been clean excepting about the fingers which were sometimes licked free of cheap candy. She

bought ice and prepared milk for pallid little babies that were near to death in the summer heat. She sat by the bedside of sick and discouraged women and nursed them back to life. And she gave wisely and carefully all the money she could get from her father. This was the life that Emily Griswold had chosen.

"Are they doing lasting good?" said Archbishop Sullivan, himself a product of the Fourth Ward, to a man who had spoken sceptically of the work. "I do not know and I do not care. They are doing as much good as they can for those who need their help. And they are doing the greatest good to themselves," and his voice grew warmer and the Irish accent more pronounced. "From one of these, man, will some day come the Maccabæus to lead us victorious through Armageddon fight!"

It was not to be supposed that her father and brother were the only men in the world who would try to turn Emily Griswold from her work. The heart of a Madonna, the soul of a warrior and a face that made men reverentially drop their eyes before its ethereal beauty—this was Emily Griswold, "a thing of fire and air." One after another they came and tried to persuade her that it would be a

crime for such as she to go through life unmated. One after another they were gently sent to seek mates elsewhere. One only refused to accept defeat. He was Laurence Duncan, a boyhood friend. He loved her devotedly, but he could not sympathize with her work. His training for generations had been against it and he was not one of those who are big enough to rise above tradition. She admitted him to a brotherly relationship. Had he been able to see life through her eyes there might have been— But no matter. He could not do it and she went on without him.

They worked hard—these delicately nurtured women who had turned their backs on French maids and frivolities. But in spite of all their work Emily came home each night more discouraged. She had striven hard for several years and watched others about her who shamed her with constant toil, but she could see that things were going from bad to worse in the slums. Saloons sprang up over night and were patronized more and more. Wages, especially along the docks, went down and down. Rents crept up little by little. Back of it all she could feel a sinister, irresistible power that pushed her little efforts aside like

straws. She did not know it then, but it was the same power that was slowly fastening itself with a vampire grip on the entire city—the strangling boss-rule of “Shindy Mike” Regan.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RISE OF REGAN

**M**ICHAEL REGAN was the finished product of the boss-system. This was due only in part to his natural talent for getting money and his genius for leadership. He built on the foundation of the organization the bygone bosses had left him but he avoided their mistakes and extended the power of the boss far beyond its hitherto uncrossed boundary—party lines.

He did not follow the beaten path. This had always been to obtain control of the party machinery and use it ruthlessly for selfish ends until some stronger and younger man should rise in the army of spoilers and seize the leadership for himself. Regan's imagination and grasp of power went far beyond this point.

You must know that in every great city there are two political parties who struggle for ballots at each election. As a rule they are different only in the personalities of the men who control. They have a common issue, a

common purpose—loot. The American citizen loves a fight and when one party has robbed and sweated him beyond endurance he goes wrathfully to the polls and places a new and hungrier horde of bandits in control of his city's finances and development. He is looted as before and he returns to the first gang of robbers—so that they may take up the work of pillage where they left off at the time of the interruption.

Occasionally a few courageous, moral and clear-visioned men make an independent fight for decency and for a time they triumph. Nothing can stand before the storm of their wrath. But the forces of corruption yield only as a strong tree in the wind. The wind passes and the tree rises unscathed. The roots are not loosened. They are firmly fastened in the apathy and cynicism and cowardice of the public.

Regan recognized that there must be two parties so that the citizens might continue to believe that there was real fighting for their good on one side or the other. But he had conceived the bold plan of controlling both of them.

Even as mere leader of the Fourth Ward,

his powerful personality made the neighboring chiefs look up to him as a sort of leader of the whole water-front section of the city. In less than a year he had gathered a small organization of leaders, aldermen and other office-holders who were absolutely pledged to him. In wards where there was nothing to be feared from the other party on election day he insisted on doing favors for the opposing chiefs. In this way he soon had more influence over them than their own party boss because they had no plums from leaders who could never carry their own districts at the polls.

Of course, all that he did for the enemy was done so quietly and in a manner so roundabout that the people could never trace these little favors to him and even the rival bosses of the city did not understand his methods until one primary day they discovered that Regan was absolute master of a large part of the machinery of both organizations.

A leader is always recognized. At an age when most men who play the game of politics have barely graduated from the primary class, Regan was undisputed Boss of the ruling party in the city. He at once set about strengthening his friends in the other party so that by the



time the next election came he could practically name the entire tickets of both organizations. The citizens might vote for whom they pleased: they could not help electing a sworn servant of "Shindy Mike" Regan.

Regan's financial growth more than kept pace with his political. He was even more of a financier than a politician. No chance to make a dollar escaped him. He allowed his henchmen to make just enough "to keep them in line" but the lion's share he kept for himself.

One of his first moves after he won the leadership of "the Fourth" was to begin the manufacture of mineral waters. Every saloonkeeper in the ward had to buy his products or he straightway found himself in difficulties with the police. The president of a large brewery watched this operation with interest and easily persuaded the rising boss to accept an interest in the brewery at a very low figure. Soon a large majority of the established saloons and all of the new ones in the river district were selling this beer and no other.

He owned a cigar factory and ran excursions on the lake. He gave outings and balls.

Then he became the silent, but controlling partner in a new contracting company that received a comfortable percentage of all the public work—at practically its own figure. All of these ventures prospered and he took up mortgages or bought outright dozens of the tenements where the river-folk lived—in his own and the adjoining wards. Here he invented and developed tenement speculation which is one of the cruelest and most outrageous forms of extortion that our bigger cities know.

It is worked through three or four “dummy” agents. One of these is given a lease on the building. He raises the rent of the miserable apartments fifty cents or a dollar a month and after holding on for several months or possibly a year he “sells” the lease and the new agent again raises the rents. In this way the revenue from every room in the house may be increased fifty or seventy-five per cent. in a few years. If the tenants move they move into the same sort of a situation in another house and there are always more to take their places. One of the chief beauties of the system is that “the owner has nothing to do with it.” Many highly respectable and respected landlords of wealth

have adopted it with profit and without risk of exposure.

With these things achieved Regan turned his attention to the one big idea that he had had in mind for years—the grain business. He was now more than a millionaire. With the grain contracts he could rapidly double and redouble his fortune.

Through the years in which Regan had been extending his power the Griswolds had been growing. They controlled a number of banks and had the grain business by the throat. They were practically without competition in the rich work of handling the great annual flood of wheat from the West. But Regan attacked them without hesitation. It had never occurred to him that he could not beat them.

He formed a contracting company and began to bid against the Griswolds, in a small way at first. He secured a few contracts on which he was barely able to make a small profit but the handling of them gave him a standing in the field.

Then the Griswolds began to find themselves hampered and annoyed in many strange ways. They had trouble with the dock department constantly. They were violating this or that

regulation. At last their work was held up at an important time and they incurred the lasting enmity of a big Western firm. Regan got the next contract. The Griswolds began to have labor troubles, a new experience for them. The scoopers would do better work for their "old friend, Shindy Mike" for the same wages that the Griswolds paid. He knew how to keep them in a good humor and get the work out of them. In many cases he paid less. Consequently he was able to bid less. The old firm lost more business.

Once there came a day when the Griswolds were forced to borrow money. Regan knew it and rejoiced. He would soon "have 'em down and out." And just at this time a strange thing befell.

Since the first cave-baby cried for the moon philosophers have observed that man wants what he may not have. Regan had grown mentally fat. He had all that was within his limit of desire. He was absolute lord of a great city. This fed his vanity, his love of power. He was rolling in money. This supplied him with every want, every luxury that he could invent. There were plenty of women who would have shuddered at the sight of the

proprietor of the Dip of Death who paid the worthless tribute of their bodies to the wealth and power of the Boss. In all, he seemed to give the philosophers the lie.

But one day a frank, amused glance of a girl's gray eyes and the touch of a slim, cool lady-hand in his thick palm struck in his self-bound soul a tink spark that was to grow a consuming flame and drive him far out of the course of his self-satisfied life.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A MEETING

**S**UCCESSFUL ignorance is blatantly contemptuous of that which it does not understand. Attempts at political reforms in the city were according to Regan always led by a "bunch of sore-headed suckers." Civic-uplift movements were supported only by "Sunday-school mutts." He knew of the work of the settlement women, and observed it with a mixture of puzzlement and amusement. He concluded that they were a "lot of nutty skirts" but entirely harmless.

Regan was the type of egoist to whom envy, which is the meanest follower of power, is as the breath of the nostrils. He was the ruler of the city and therefore, in his simple logic, the envy of all in his domain. He had never given that idea the slightest question. It was a matter of course. If you had told him that there was a small class of society who not only did not envy him but had for him a contempt so profound that they did not even think about

him at all he would have thought you a dangerous type of lunatic and would probably have knocked you down.

But these people were as far removed from his life as he was from theirs and he scarcely knew of their existence. This was the little coterie in which the house of Griswold wielded social power.

It was a bright spring morning that Destiny selected as the time to begin the destruction of his peace of mind and the completion of his education. He motored down into his old ward to give the manager of the Flea-bag "a jackin' up." A soft spring breeze swept in from the lake and the sunshine poured down like golden wine. It was a day to set the blood of a man racing and even the dwellers of the ward seemed to walk with a springier step as if they felt that somewhere beyond the walls of their miserable prison the green beauty of the world had been born again in gladness.

As he guided the big car in and out among trucks and delivery wagons and push-carts he was gloriously satisfied with himself and life in general. It seemed to him that his cup was almost full and he drank in the spring air and warm sunshine until he felt that he had never

been so splendidly and intensely alive. He even made up his mind that he would not be so hard as he had at first intended on O'Halloran for not showing a bigger business in the past month.

He leaped out of the car, and, as he stood with a hand upon the handle of the door, a woman brushed against his arm. He turned his head, drew a quick breath and remained fixed and motionless for fully twenty seconds.

She carried a small basket, but he knew that she did not belong in the ward, although he had the barest glimpse of her face. She wore a small, simple straw hat, a white shirtwaist and blue serge skirt. A white shirtwaist is the greatest snare that the wit of woman has yet devised for the captivity of men. As Regan quickly turned his head he met the calm, pleasant gaze of a pair of gray eyes and caught a flash of white teeth between soft, curving red lips that half-smiled acceptance of the apology he had not time to offer. Next he saw a delicate, translucent ear with a few stray wisps of brown hair curling against a skin so smooth and finely grained that the white, finely woven collar of the waist seemed coarse as canvas. Then she had passed and he could see only the



springy movement of her lithe, slender figure as she quickly turned the corner and was gone. But the arm that she had brushed felt strange within the coat. It was as if it had passed through some spiritual atmosphere of cleanliness and purity which surrounded her like an unseen aura and had entered his coarser soul.

He shook himself like a man coming out of a dream and almost smiled at the strange impression the glance of a passing girl could make on him. He entered the saloon. His talk with O'Halloran was so mild that the latter gentleman lay awake most of the night trying to figure out: "What the Boss think I got on him?"

It must not be inferred that this incident made anything of a lasting impression on Regan. He was rather more mystified than anything else by the passing touch of an emotion that he had never known before, the instinctive reverence for a woman, which he subconsciously recognized as belonging to a higher and better world than his own. In twenty-four hours he had forgotten all about it.

More than a week later business took him once more into the river district and as he was

slowly working his way out toward the up-town streets he caught sight of the Archbishop standing in front of a tenement. Instantly he turned his car in to the curb and raised his hat with a respectful smile.

"If there ain't His Grace!" he exclaimed cordially. "Can't I give Your Riverince a lift somewhere?"

Regan was a Catholic and had learned respect for the servants of the Church at his mother's knee. But he was also a political boss, a fact that increased his respect.

"One o' these priests," he declared once, "c'n raise more hell'n all th' reformers out o' jail."

So he gave liberally when the Church asked and even contributed to charities supported by Protestant divines. It was all a part of his business in life, a load of coal, or the rent money, a check for the doctor's bill to some of the humbler of his slaves.

His Grace looked up as Regan spoke and nodded with a smile—the smile that lighted a sick-room like a sunburst. He was what his late father had called "a foine, upshtanding buck of a man," and one needed not to know his history to judge from his muscular frame,

the flash of his dark eyes and the set of the blue-black chin that he was a soldier, as well as a servant, of the Church. He was very young for an Archbishop, only a few years older than Regan.

"You can in a moment, me son," he said, in a deep voice with that soft brogue which defies the efforts of type and ink at reproduction. "I am waiting here for a young lady who is upstairs with some medicine for old Mrs. Moriarity. We were going back on the trolley but you can take us."

Regan got out of the car and stood chatting with His Grace until he glanced up as there was a faint rustle of skirts from the doorway and a soft, flute-like voice said:

"I hope I haven't kept Your Grace waiting too long."

For the first time in his life Mike Regan was utterly nonplused, tongue-tied with embarrassment. In the doorway was the girl who had passed him in front of the Flea-bag a week ago.

He stared at her with wide-open eyes, but was utterly unconscious that he was doing so. This lasted but a few moments, and, as she met his gaze with a slightly inquiring look, the

Archbishop stepped forward with a smile, saying:

"This is Mr. Regan, my daughter. He is going to take us back in that big auto of his and probably fill my head with sinful and covetous thoughts. Regan—" he turned to the still staring Boss—"this is Miss Griswold."

He seemed to think that introduction sufficient on both sides, and the girl advanced with outstretched hand and a smile which completed Regan's confusion.

"That is very kind of Mr. Regan," she said. "I am glad to meet him."

Regan had never felt a hand like this—soft and slender but with an unmistakable promise of nervous force. He squeezed it convulsively in his thick paw and dropped it awkwardly.

"I'm much obliged to—Miss, you're welcome," he stammered, and then as he caught the Archbishop's fatherly smile he pulled himself together and managed to say in most stately, political-meeting manner:

"I'm glad to make yer acquaintance, Miss Griswold."

Afterward, he stood stiffly by the machine until the Archbishop laughed:

"Well, Michael, we're ready when you are."

Regan opened the door of the tonneau. Before he could think what was the next proper step the Archbishop had handed the girl gracefully to a seat, had stepped in behind her and slammed the door. In the work of starting the engine and steering once more out into the stream of traffic he recovered much of his self-possession and was able to join in the conversation a little, throwing remarks over his shoulder from time to time as he could take his attention away from the business of piloting the big car. He wondered why Miss Griswold laughed every time he spoke. He knew that the Archbishop had told her who he was, but instead of being awed she seemed amused at his speech. In a dim way he realized that his way of putting things entertained her for the moment and that beyond this she had no interest in him. He began to feel irritated.

Then she began discussing something with the priest which he did not understand and he felt like a hired chauffeur. He drove his own machine for the sheer love of mastery of everything with which he had to do, but he then and there resolved to make that chauffeur of his earn his pay thereafter.

When the Archbishop insisted on getting out of the car and taking the girl also as they reached "their own part of town" he was puzzled and hurt. His feelings as he drove slowly toward his own home were distinctly such as he had never before experienced, but out of them came a resolve and one gleam of triumph.

The Archbishop wondered why Regan was so anxious to see him from day to day and take him about in his car. He did not understand even when, one bright afternoon, he found himself in the tonneau of the Boss's car with a chauffeur at the steering wheel and Miss Griswold between the priest and the politician, bound out for a few hours' entertainment as the guests of Regan.

He took them across the river and through the park to an old road-house with a long, wide verandah where they sat at a little marble-topped table and sipped cool drinks out of tall glasses. A noble parkway curved before them and they watched auto after auto whiz by and occasionally a gay party of horsemen and horsewomen cantering along in the shade of the great trees. It was a delightful spot and the air and the scene and the cool drinks loos-

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ened the tongues of the men. It was an afternoon that Emily Griswold never forgot.

She had heard much about Regan since their first meeting but all that she had heard—excepting that he was a man of no education—failed utterly of substantiation as she looked and listened while he talked. Unconsciously, Regan had put all that was best in him on the outside that afternoon, and Emily Griswold was, after all, a woman. Although his heel was on the city he never referred to politics or money or power and he refrained, not through any set plan, but because the conversation never seemed to drift that way and he made no effort so to direct it.

Something started the Archbishop on the subject of Ireland and Regan felt that he would be at home now. But the girl talked of Orr and Tone and other men whom he faintly remembered having heard his father mention. He had never paid any attention to these “old mutts” before and he wondered why there should be something in the girl’s voice that reminded him of his father when proudly telling of the fallen glory of Ireland and of the men who had cast themselves into the ruins they could not save. She was not Irish. He had

a feeling of inferiority that was oppressive and privately made up his mind to know something about "those guys" before he met the girl again.

He had a wealth of anecdote and story at command, but he could think of nothing that he felt like telling as his share of the entertainment. At last the priest said something about fairies and a long-disused cell in his memory awoke. With an embarrassment he could not understand he told of a cliff beside a river where there was a wondrous treasure that had lured at least one man to his death. You might lie on the opposite bank and watch, just as the evening sunlight ceased to dance on Donegal Bay. A great diamond "as big as a coach an' four" would begin to gleam in the cliff-side beyond the river. But if you crossed you could not find it. One man loaded a cannon with chalk and fired it against the great gem to mark the place. The next day he went to get the gem, and was never seen again.

His audience was delighted and for the first time in twenty years Regan blushed as he hastily took a drink. Then the Archbishop took up the trail of folk-lore, and Emily heard many strange and humorous tales. For there are



still fairies in Ireland. We have driven the Little People out of our busy world, but they have found an abiding place on the storm-swept west coast of the Green Island.

As they told the quaint stories of their fatherland the men dropped farther and farther back into their kindred speech. The hard, cynical note passed out of Regan's voice and the Archbishop's brogue grew a thing of wonder. Emily laughed and bubbled all afternoon, and, when the Archbishop told at great length an utterly pointless tale of a duel between an Irishman and an Englishman, she was near to betraying herself. It began: "There was an Irishman in London—there was an Englishman there, too," and the Archbishop had to wait a few minutes until Miss Griswold recovered from the effect of the opening line. The Irishman fought with a flail and the Englishman with a sword, and when His Grace described how "the Englishman's swor-r-rd was glittherin' so you c'd see it a mile away" the girl was speechless with laughter. She tried all evening to make her family understand how His Grace had pronounced "glittherin'." Curiously enough, she did not mention the fact that she had been in Regan's company.

It was a happy little party and Regan had to exert no great power of persuasion to get the other two into similar expeditions on several occasions in the ensuing few weeks. Then there came a change. While Emily was receiving large and expensive bouquets of roses daily from some mysterious admirer, Regan was struggling with a new idea: he had for the first time come in contact with that intangible and pitiless something which we call caste. Emily frankly liked him. So did the Archbishop, though he knew more than the girl even dreamed. Regan knew that these two were favorably disposed toward him and he thought it but a matter of making the effort when he would be received by Emily's set and from that place of vantage much could be done. It did not occur to him that she had never remotely thought of him as a social or intellectual equal.

Regan's experiences in laying siege to the aristocracy of Washington Street may be left to the imagination. They were not pleasant. After three distinct and unmistakable snubs he retired from the fight like a wounded grizzly. In the first flush of a rage that smoldered for many long months he swore a

mighty oath against the Griswolds and all their kind. Then, with all the fierce energy of his nature he strove for their ruin.

And the day that the Western Amalgamated abandoned Griswold and Company he licked his lips as he had that night when he looked at Kelly's battered head in the Dip of Death. He had planned his revenge long since and the hour of its fulfilment had come.

## CHAPTER V

### AT THE BRINK

**M**R. GRISWOLD had aged years in the past six months and he looked like an old man as he hurried home early in the afternoon of the day that Western Amalgamated went over to Regan. He had reached the end of his resources. Donald had gone for a talk with Regan at the latter's office. The young man believed that there was still a chance for a compromise which would save the firm's name but his father had no hope. His face was gray. He pulled nervously at a moustache that had gone from gray to almost white in three months; in his eyes was the hunted look of a man who is trying to choose between deathless disgrace and—a pistol shot.

Donald did not know all. He did not know that his father had deposited securities in their three banks to cover loans to the contracting firm and that these securities had been hammered until they were worth scarcely half of the money his father had borrowed. The

failure of his firm meant more than poverty to the elder Griswold. It meant a criminal trial with a doubtful acquittal at the end and name besmirched for all time.

It had been agreed that if Donald could effect no arrangement with the Boss he was to persuade him to come up to the Griswold house for a final conference. The head of the firm went into the library to wait. It was a fine old room—everything that the culture and refinement of years, aided by money, could make it.

He threw himself into a chair, but sprang up immediately and strode hurriedly over to the fireplace and back. He stopped at the great center-table, picked up a silver cigarette box, took out a cigarette, lighted it, walked hurriedly over to the fireplace and threw it away. He was never still for one long hour.

There was a quick step in the hall which he recognized. He glanced up sharply as his son opened the door and stepped in. He had told himself fifty times in this hour that Donald's mission was useless—that he was simply giving Regan an opportunity for coarse gloating. He thought he read the answer in his son's face.

"Now what do you say?" he demanded, with set teeth. His voice was faintly hoarse. Donald turned and carefully shut the door.

"Well?" demanded his father as the young man faced him. Donald's well-squared shoulders were carried as proudly as ever and his face was set in an expressionless calm. He was a handsome, strong-looking man but a close observer of faces might have read in a slight contraction of the nostrils and general over-refinement in the chiseling of his features a slight narrowness of mentality, which was a heritage from his hide-bound ancestry.

"It's all right," he replied calmly. "He says he'll be over here at five and talk it over."

The father turned quickly to the mantel and it was several seconds before he could speak. Donald coolly stripped off his gloves and dropped them with some papers on the table.

"Thank God!" exclaimed the older man, fervently. "You've been out just an hour and ten minutes. I didn't know what to think."

"He kept me waiting. His office is jammed full."

"D'you think people know, then?" demanded his father, with quick alarm.

"Know what?" Donald lighted a cigarette.

"That—that he's pushed us out of business." The words came slowly and Mr. Griswold moistened his lips.

"Not yet." The young man took off his coat and threw it across a chair. "We've only known about the Western Amalgamated a few hours ourselves and Regan can't have known much longer."

At the mention of the big shipping firm the hunted, despairing look came back into the older man's eyes.

"All the rest of them will follow suit inside of a month," he said low, as he turned away.

"Steady, father!" warned the young man, kindly. He picked up a newspaper and pretended to read as if he felt it would not be wise to talk further until Regan arrived. He had some emotions of his own that were boiling at his lips. There was a silence of a few moments. When Mr. Griswold turned again he was apparently calm.

"Did you have any chance to talk to him?"

"Not much. He chewed a big cigar and put his feet on his desk and told me that he'd had an eye on our grain contracts ever since he began handling freight in '92!" And Donald tossed the paper angrily upon the table.

"Of course, he wanted them!" cried his father, bitterly, pacing up and down the room. "Why, they're the big reason this city has for being on the map. Half the wheat that goes into the world gets through this port."

He stated all this just as if Donald did not know it as well as he did. But the young man was not listening. His face had been growing darker every minute since he entered the room.

"I wish I had smashed him in the face—right before his stenographers!" he growled, viciously. The father was pursuing his own bitter line of reflection and did not seem to hear.

"I've run the business as well as I could," he went on, with a half-sigh. "I felt a public responsibility—you know that, Donald!" The young man half-smothered a bitter oath and sprang out of his chair.

"And now this Irish tough of an ex-barkeep has come along and swindled and blackjacked and knifed his way right up into the place you've—!"

"Don't, my boy, don't!" his father interrupted, holding up a restraining hand. "He'll be here in half an hour. We've got to keep cool and think!"



"Why, we could manage him if we'd be willing to stoop a bit and dabble in his own dirt!"

Again, the father apparently did not hear. He had resumed his feverish walk. "We must think! That's it—*think!*" he exclaimed desperately.

"You could have put him up at the clubs," went on the young man satirically, "introduced him to Emily—had him here at the house! I could have clapped him on the back, called him by his first name—! That's what he wanted!" His voice rose with his rage. "He'd have paid for that!"

"Donald! drop it! We've got just half an hour to think up something before he comes!"

"But he's a disgrace to the city!" the young man stormed on. "He knows it—and he knows we know it and that's why he hates us so! Father!" he broke off abruptly and walked up to the elder man. "Let me call him up and tell him we've changed our minds! We'll get on without any arbitrating!"

Mr. Griswold stared his astonishment.

"Not let him come?"

"Yes!" declared Donald, hardily. "What's

the use? He's just doing it to gloat over us. He hopes we're going to crawl awhile—he'd enjoy that!"

"I don't care!" cried his father, in an agony of despair. "I've got to see him and find if there isn't some way out!"

Donald turned away with a shrug.

"There isn't!" he snapped.

"There *must* be!" insisted his father, his teeth clenched. "My boy, my boy! D' you realize what we're in for?"

"Do I?" Donald threw him a grating laugh.

"It isn't as if money were the only thing!"

"I know that!" nodded Donald grimly.

"It's the integrity of the firm—it's my good name," broke out Mr. Griswold, wildly, as his terror gripped him anew. "It's—"

"Now, father, please!" interrupted the young man, his manner softening. But he could not stop the flood.

"Those notes—those savings-bank notes! What about them? They're due December first. If we fail, I can't meet them. Those banks'll go under like *that*! And—"

"Stop, father! Don't—"

"And, Donald, d' you know what those

stockholders are going to say? They're going to say, 'He was a director. Griswold was a director!' and—"

The sharp slamming of a door cut off the words. Donald stepped quickly over to the library door, opened it and listened. His father stood panting and breathless in the middle of the floor, with little beads of perspiration on his death-white face. Donald softly closed the crack and turned a reassuring nod.

"It's all right," he said, speaking softly. "It's only Emily!"

Mr. Griswold's tense figure relaxed. A tremulous sigh of relief escaped him and he had just time to pass his handkerchief across his moist forehead and somewhat compose his features when the girl came gaily into the room.

## CHAPTER VI

### A FAMILY SQUABBLE

**D**ONALD had just time to get back to the table, pick up a newspaper and open it ostentatiously before his sister stopped in a blank amazement at seeing both father and brother home hours before their time. She was still in furs and street costume.

"Hello! Why, whatever made you two come home at—?" She stopped suddenly as she noticed her father's haggard face.

"Dad! You're ill!" she exclaimed with sudden alarm, hurrying up to him. "You're white as a sheet! Don!" she turned quickly to her brother who was only partially visible behind the newspaper. "Why, what's the matter? What's happened?"

"Nothing! Nothing at all," came gruffly from the other side of the paper. Her father had turned away.

She glanced quickly from one to the other and then made a determined descent on her brother.

"Yes, there is," she insisted. "Oh, tell me, please—quick!"

With regained composure her father spoke gently.

"It's all right, dear. Donald and I have to talk business with a man we couldn't very well ask to the office, so I suggested his coming here. You aren't expecting anyone to tea, are you?"

"Just Laurie Duncan. He doesn't count," the girl replied, her gaze still bent anxiously on her father's face. "Oh, Dad, you do look dreadful!"

"Then we can use this room—yes, that would be better than taking him upstairs," pursued Mr. Griswold, ignoring the last exclamation. "You see, it's Shindy Mike."

Emily started with a quick gasp of surprise.

"You don't mean Regan!" she exclaimed. Her father nodded. There was a slight pause and then she added slowly: "What have you got to see Regan about?"

Donald broke into the conversation with a short:

"A lot of things a woman wouldn't understand."

Emily unconsciously felt relieved; for a moment she had feared that in some vague way the meeting concerned her.

"Don't be so snappy, Don!" she said reprovingly.

Her brother had shown in his business career that he was by no means a bad strategist and he was more than willing to quarrel with his sister if it would keep her from asking questions.

"See here!" he growled, folding up the paper and tossing it on the table. "You may be all right when you're down in the slums but when it comes to business you're no earthly good. Do you hear? No earthly good!"

Emily gave him a glance of cool regard.

"You're evidently in one of your fox-terrier moods to-day," she observed.

"Well, is she, father?" he appealed angrily.

"Children," said Mr. Griswold, with a nervous movement of the hands, "stop squabbling, please."

"Now, Dad, I—" protested Emily. But her father hastily interrupted, taking Don's lead in a different way.

"How's my young scientific philanthropist?" he asked, affectionately. "You've spent the

afternoon in your beloved slums, haven't you? Well, where did you go?" And you might have supposed that information as to her movements was the thing of paramount interest to him at the moment.

There was never a time of day or night when Miss Griswold could not be easily persuaded to talk about the settlement work and she rose to the lure without a second's pause. She took off her furs and replied with a sigh:

"Oh, down in the Fourth Ward—around the docks."

"Regan's district!" muttered her father, turning to stare abstractedly into the fire while the girl went on with her story.

Donald kept up a pretense of attention.

"Oh, it's too sordid!" she exclaimed, with a catch in her voice. "And it seems to get worse instead of better. The men spend all their wages on drink, so, of course, the women can't feed the children. And they haven't shoes or coal—think of it!—and the winter coming on.

"And the worst of it is they don't really seem to care. I talk to the men but they just act tired and listless—and say that they can't help it, that I don't understand. Well," she sighed, "perhaps I don't. But I know that

every time I see their faces I feel, all of a sudden, how much the world is carrying on its back. And it makes me want to cry because there is so little—so awfully little!—I can do to help.”

“That’s perfectly true,” agreed her brother, with a shrug of the shoulders. “So why don’t you drop it, Emily, and act like other girls? These people can easily get along without you. You’re not so important as all that.”

“As a matter of fact, I’m awfully important,” his sister corrected him, with a little smile.

“Huh!” remarked Donald, in a brotherly grunt.

“You ought to hear what Mrs. Moriarity said to Mrs. Scanlon about me.”

“Oh!”

“She said if the angels weren’t built on my style, not even God could make her go to Heaven!”

For the first time that day the young man achieved a hearty, soul-felt grin.

“Mrs. Moriarity must be somewhat of a humorist,” he suggested.

“So don’t ask me to stop working,” the girl



went on earnestly. "I won't! I can't—until I have a big club-house for the men and a cooking-school for the women!"

"And an incubator for the children, I suppose," added Donald, ironically.

"Yes, that's it," smiled the girl.

Mr. Griswold suddenly turned from his scrutiny of the wood-embers.

"Are you sure he said five o'clock?" he demanded abruptly.

"Yes. Why?" Donald glanced at his watch. "It's only twenty-five minutes now."

Emily's face fell and she looked from one to the other with growing annoyance.

"Dad," she said accusingly, "you haven't listened to one word I've been saying."

Mr. Griswold roused himself from his reverie with a visible effort.

"Haven't I, my dear?" he said, contritely. "I'm awfully sorry, but I've got so much on my mind."

"I knew it! Something is the matter!" declared the girl, rising from the arm of the big chair where she had rested during her chat with her brother. "Dad, I feel so guilty! I've spent the whole day down in the Ward and you've been in trouble and I haven't been here to help you. I don't think your Emily's much

good after all," she went on pathetically, walking up to him with her hands held out. "But please forgive her, for my sake, and tell me all about it."

"Now, father!" exclaimed Donald, warningly, as he saw the worn, lined face melt in a gaze of grief and love. But the warning was unnecessary.

"Nothing, dear," said the father, gently, "there's nothing serious the matter. I have told you so once."

But Emily apparently did not hear him. "Wait a moment," she said, with the air of one thinking hard. Regan was coming to see her father. Regan was in the grain-contracting business and she had heard a snatch of talk here and there that she could not piece together. She looked up and with an air of finality declared:

"It's Regan!"

"Now, Emily," began her brother, firmly, taking her by the arms and backing her toward the hall-door, "we have to talk business—and there isn't much time. So, run away, dear, please—d' you mind?"

"Mind? Yes, of course, I mind!" the girl returned, shaking off his arms. She drew herself up stiffly and declared:

"I'm going to stay here and hear what you have to say."

"No, you're not," retorted her brother grimly, advancing once more.

"Don, stop contradicting me! Even though I am a girl, I'm one of the family and I intend to be consulted whenever there's anything important going on."

"This is private!" stormed her brother. "D' you hear? *Private!*"

"I don't care if it is or not!" cried the girl with all the angry obstinacy that a lordly brother usually arouses.

"Father, make her go away!" fumed Donald, appealing to the head of the house, who had been trying to interrupt without success.

"Now, dear, please—" he began soothingly.

Emily suddenly interrupted:

"I know what it is! Will you tell me if I'm right?"

"You don't know anything about it!" snapped the young man.

"Don't I, though?" she retorted. "Regan's trying to steal Dad's grain contracts!"

By a strong effort Donald managed to conceal his surprise and turn away disgustedly with, "Emily, you make me tired!" But the girl was not to be put off.

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"Isn't that right, dear?" she appealed to her father.

He, too, turned away with a murmured "No," but for a different reason. He was glad in a dull sort of way that he did not have to lie to his daughter, but the mention of Regan and the contracts from her lips brought down on him the crushing weight of his misfortunes with added pain.

Yet for the time at least he was past any violent emotion. The storms of the recent months had left him without the moral strength to guard against his own child. He was listless and tired. That was it—tired. Instinctively he felt that he must save himself for the struggle with Regan and in order to do that he must let himself go now. He heard Donald's triumphant:

"There! What did I tell you? Now, will you—?"

Griswold turned to his daughter and interrupted.

"He has stolen them. He's done us, Emily," he said almost dully.

"What?" Emily caught at the bosom of her dress with both hands.

Donald swore under his breath.

"Father!" he cried, sharply. "D'you think this is wise?"

His son's voice pricked Griswold like a spur but he shrugged his shoulders and threw a desperate glance about the room.

"She's got to hear it—sooner or later," he groaned.

Emily gazed at him with parted lips.

"You don't mean—the Western—" she half-whispered.

Her father gulped and nodded. "Yes, the Western went over to him to-day."

Emily took a quick step toward him.

"But the others?"

"They'll follow like sheep," he replied, wearily. "No—we're finished. This time—we're finished!"

He turned to the mantel and resumed his study of the glowing fire. Emily rushed to him and put both hands on his arm. She was frightened as she had never been in her life. It was not that they might lose all they had in the world. Those who have never lacked money do not consider the lack or the possession of it as of material importance. Naturally, her father must feel the same way. Yet here was the splendid man whom she had idol-

ized from the first day of understanding, broken, cowed!—acknowledging himself beaten! She almost shook his arm.

“But, Dad, Dad! You mustn’t give up!” she exclaimed feverishly. “You must—arrange it with him—discuss it!—come to an understanding—!”

“That’s why we’ve asked him here this afternoon. But—” He made a gesture of despair and sank into a chair. The girl gazed at him a moment. She turned to her brother imploringly.

“Don, can’t you manage it somehow?”

The young man shrugged his shoulders but not in his brotherly way of dismissing her. She knew now and he was rather glad of it. She was game, his sister.

“I’ll do my best,” he said, grimly, and smothered an oath. “If we could only get him to keep those thieving hands off the Western for one month, just one month—couldn’t I make him lie down and take the count!”

Emily ran to him eagerly.

“How?”

“The easiest thing in the world.”

“Well, tell us,” she insisted.

The elder man looked up, a gleam of interest in his tired eyes.

"Go on, my boy," he urged.

"I'd get his men to strike!"

"His men to strike!" echoed Emily. "Could you do it?"

"Could I? Good Lord!" he laughed bitterly. "Why, they're just like a magazine! All they need is a leader who's studied law and has a little nerve."

"How many of them are there?"

"Over eight thousand! And sick to death of being rounded up like Texas steers with a gang of toughs for cow-boys. I could get after his liquor system, too. The public doesn't even know he has one!"

Emily started and looked puzzled.

"His liquor system?" she queried.

"There—you see!" exclaimed the young man, as if she had proved his point.

"But what is his liquor system, Don?" she insisted.

"Why, it's his money that's back of every saloon in the Fourth Ward, practically, and each employee that won't leave half of his pay on a Regan bar before he goes home Saturday night gets his quit notice before the whistle blows on Monday morning!"

A shocked exclamation escaped from the girl.

"I—is that—true?" she asked in a low voice.

"True!" Her brother laughed again. "Why, that's just one of the little tricks that have made him what he is to-day!"

There was a short pause. Then Emily spoke slowly, as if to herself.

"Then that's why the men come home drunk—and the children have no food—and the women say I don't understand."

"People say Shindy Mike's out for the dollar," went on her brother with another grating little laugh. "It's a lie! He's out for the dime. And you can take it from me that every penny he owns he has ripped right out of a human heart!"

Emily shivered and was silent for a few moments. This, then, was the man who had pleased and amused her! This was the man whom she liked for what seemed to be his innate chivalry when he had treated her with a clumsy deference that almost made her forget his lack of culture! This was the man who had told her tales of Irish folk-lore like a harmless boy! Had these people to whom she consecrated her life paid for the auto in which he entertained her? She shuddered again.

"Don," she cried, suddenly, "why didn't you tell me this before?"



"Why, what's the matter?" demanded her brother, in surprise.

"I've met him—" Emily began almost timidly.

"Regan?" exclaimed her father, amazed

"Where?" demanded the brother.

"With the Archbishop—and at a dinner. And he rides in the park. I rode with him only a few days ago."

"Emily!"

"My child!"

Donald sprang violently out of his chair and her father rose as rapidly as incredulous astonishment would permit.

"He—he wasn't at all what I expected," the girl hurried on, apologetically. "Of course, he was tough! There was something—something nice about him," she declared defiantly. Her father held up his hand and her brother snorted. "Really, there was something—oh, I don't know, Dad, but—why he was just like—a little boy!"

"Little boy!" Donald's voice rose almost to a falsetto in the intensity of his scorn. "You're a nice sort of girl, you are! Playing around with a crook who's stolen your father's business! You—"

"Well, I didn't know that, did I?" interrupted Emily with some just resentment. "You and Dad never open your mouths to me and when anything happens it's my fault! I suppose I— What do you want, Mitchell?" she broke off as the butler appeared at the door.

"Mr. Duncan," announced the servant, as he held open the door for the visitor. Young Duncan was a lazy-looking, attractive, well-kept young man and he entered the library with the unconscious air of ease of the visitor who feels perfectly at home and is sure of his welcome.

He greeted the Griswolds with a gay, "Well, Emily. Glad to see you don't spend all your time in the Fourth Ward. How d'you do, sir! Hello, Don!"

To which Emily gave no sign of acknowledgment. Mr. Griswold nodded and Donald with a, "Hello," moved over to the window and turned his back on the entire assemblage. Mr. Duncan, no whit abashed, smiled easily.

"Mr. Griswold," he said pleasantly, turning to the elder man, "have those two been scrapping again?" Donald turned around but

Duncan walked over to Emily. "What's the matter?" he inquired.

"You talk as if this were a peace conference," said Emily coolly, walking away from him and settling herself at the piano. "But," she threw a look at her brother's surly countenance, "it isn't!"

Donald returned the look with usury, and snapped:

"Not by a long shot!"

Mr. Griswold leaned his head on his arms against the mantel. He seemed to have forgotten that the young people were in the room.

"I believe you!" laughed Duncan and then he hurried over to Emily. The rôle of a determinedly pleasant friend in a house of trouble grows rapidly irksome. "Please let's have tea," he said, as the young lady's fingers ran lightly over the keys. "I'm awfully hungry."

"Tea!" Emily glanced up blankly without interrupting the music.

"Yes, you know you promised—oh, if you've forgotten," he suddenly stiffened. "Don't bother. I'll come another time."

He made for the door but Emily stopped playing and as if that had been a cue the march to the exit also stopped.

"Of course! I remember now!" smiled Emily, sweetly. "Sit down, Laurie, and don't be a goose."

Mr. Griswold slowly raised his head and turned. Donald signaled to him that they were to leave the room. Duncan lighted a cigarette and took a chair by the table while Donald strode out. As his father started to follow, Emily stopped him.

"Listen, Daddy!" she half-whispered, her hands on the lapels of his coat as she looked up into his eyes with love and courage. "So long as you and I and Don are well and have each other I don't think we ought to worry much, no matter how badly business goes—do you?"

Her father looked down at her almost coldly. He had steeled himself for the coming interview.

"My dear, I'm afraid you don't understand these things," he said. "Good-bye, my boy," he added to Duncan. "Remember me to your mother."

"Thanks, Mr. Griswold. Good-evening!" The elder man was almost at the door when Donald impatiently reappeared. Before he could get away, he, too, was stopped by the girl.

"Don, will you forgive me?" she asked, after her father was out of earshot down the hall.

"You don't deserve it," growled her brother, trying to look stern, as she stroked the sleeve of his coat.

"Now, if I promise never, never, to do it again?" she coaxed.

His features relaxed into a smile that was half-grim, half-tender.

"Don't bother. I'll take care of what he does," he said. With a quick kiss on the forehead he followed his father.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Emily whimsically, as she rang the bell for the tea things, "I have so much trouble keeping my men folk in order."

## CHAPTER VII

### A PARTING

**D**UNCAN laughed at the tone and air that accompanied these words, but there was no answering smile from the girl.

“Don’t laugh, Laurie,” she said, gently. “I’m depressed this afternoon.”

She walked slowly over to the fireplace and stood looking down into the flames as her father had done a few minutes before. In an instant Duncan was beside her.

“What’s the matter?” he asked with tender sympathy.

The girl did not reply for a moment. Then without lifting her eyes from the fire she said in a voice that trembled slightly:

“Life, that’s all—just life.”

He drew up alongside her. Her hand rested lightly on his arm for a fleeting instant. She seemed about to rest her head against his shoulder as if to place a burden there that was too heavy for her own. The faint perfume of

her hair came to him and he caught his breath sharply.

For a second that seemed an hour to him, they were so. Then Emily threw back her head with a little laugh and walked over to the tea-table. The moment of seriousness was gone.

The butler brought the tea and disappeared and Emily began making mental preparations for a serious talk with her faithful swain about himself and his attitude toward life—something she had intended for a long time.

“Now, pull up the big chair,” she said briskly, “and we’ll have a nice, comfy time. You’d better begin by ’fessing up, don’t you think?”

“What about?” inquired Duncan, as he sank into a big arm-chair.

“Those roses,” said Emily, nodding toward a splendid bouquet of American Beauties in a vase on the piano.

“Not guilty,” declared the young man promptly.

“Don’t be absurd. They came just as usual—four huge boxes of them. You might admit it, Laurie—when you see me wearing one of them.” And her fingers lightly touched the glorious blossom on her bosom.

"I may be a liar," returned Duncan calmly, "but I have my odd moments of telling the truth—honestly, I have! And I feel one coming on now."

"Well, let it come," suggested the girl.

"I'm far too hard-up to send you American Beauties at twenty-five a dozen—oh, yes, I priced them all right. Although—" the light note dropped out of his tone—"you know, Emily, if I could I'd have you walk on rose-leaves for the rest of your life."

"Rose-leaves!" repeated Emily, quickly. "Oh, Laurie, if you knew how people irritate me when they talk like that! If you'd seen what I have this afternoon, you'd— How do you take your tea?" she asked, politely, suddenly checking her speech. "Five lumps and cream?"

He looked at her curiously for a moment and then rose suddenly and walked around his chair.

"Oh, I don't want any tea, Emily!" he exclaimed nervously.

"No tea?" She looked up at him, apparently in hurt surprise. "Then what did you come for? You said—"

Something in his manner made her stop. He was standing just above and facing her,



his left hand resting on the table. Something in his eyes and the faint flush on his handsome face made her breath come a little faster but she gazed up at him, outwardly calm

"I came because I wanted to ask you something," he blurted out. "I've been trying to get up my courage for weeks but—but—why, there's something about you that frightens me—it always has. For Heaven's sake! Stop thinking a moment, can't you, Emily? Don't look at me like that! It's horrible!" Then with a rush: "Emily, will you marry me? Yes, that's it—I want you to marry me!—Now I've done it!" He dropped back a step pulled out his handkerchief hastily and mopped his forehead.

Emily never took her eyes off his face.

"Oh, my dear boy!" she exclaimed softly, with a mixture of sorrow and tenderness.

"Well? What about it?" he asked anxiously.

Emily shook her head and studied his face gravely.

"I'm afraid you mustn't talk to me that way any more," she said gently.

"Mustn't talk that way! Why not?" demanded the young man, indignantly.

"I—I couldn't, that's all." And for the first time, Emily's eyes sank. "Now let's talk about something else," she added, with an attempt at brisk finality.

But while he was no paladin, young Duncan was made of sterner stuff than that. He was not beaten yet and if he should be he was determined to let the enemy know there had been a battle. He planted a small chair beside her and sat himself down in it with an air of decision.

"No, we won't," he declared; "not till we've finished this! I think I've known you long enough, Emily, to say a few things you ought to hear, so I'm going to light right in. You haven't treated me squarely."

Emily stared at him in genuine surprise.

"Why not?"

"Just because you're clever and beautiful and know five times as much as most men, that's no reason for leading them on—"

"I don't lead them on!" she interrupted with a flush of indignation.

"Yes, you do! You do lead them on," he affirmed, positively. "And then when they're all tangled up you take delight in turning them down!"

"Oh, Laurie!" exclaimed the girl, truly hurt, as she saw that he was in earnest. "That's not fair!"

"What if they weren't up to philanthropy and economics and civic responsibility and all that sort of thing?" he went on without heeding the interruption. "They were mighty fine fellows, some of them, and that counts a lot! No, Emily, I'm afraid I believe now what I used to think I never could—that you haven't any heart, after all!"

Emily recovered her balance during the latter part of this speech, which was no very knightly affair.

"Oh, take a biscuit and stop being silly!" she exclaimed impatiently.

"No, thanks," he said, declining the proffered plate. "Everybody said you hadn't," he continued, "but I've been fool enough to think I knew you better. Well, I don't—any more! Good-bye!"

He rose with dignity, bowed, and was making for the door when Emily stopped him.

"No, wait, Laurie," she said, simply and seriously. "You mustn't go like that." He returned slowly and with seeming reluctance. She continued gravely: "You may be right

about me. I don't know—I feel that way about myself, lots of times! And yet I do believe—'way down, deep down—I believe there is a man waiting for me and that I'll know him when he comes along!"

Duncan leaned over her chair and looked down into her eyes, eagerly, hungrily.

"Don't I look—the least bit like him?" he said in a wistful little voice. "Couldn't you manage to—mistake us in the dark?"

Emily smiled up at him.

"I'm afraid not, Laurie," she said gently. And then as he turned silently away: "Oh, please don't be hurt! You've been my best friend for so long I—I don't think I could get on without you!"

"Emily—!"

"You know the way I mean!" she interrupted hastily as the young man seemed about to rush upon her. "But I wish you—do you mind if I say it? It's only because I'm so fond of you."

"No, go ahead," said Duncan grimly, dropping into a chair. "I can stand anything now."

Emily was silent for a little time as if in perplexed thought. Then:

"I wish you'd—wake up, Laurie," she said, almost wistfully. "You've been asleep all your life. Oh, I know you've had a good time—and I like good times so much myself that I feel I ought not to say a word. But—but—oh, there's something more, Laurie. I wish when you walked down the street, everybody would turn and say, 'There goes Lawrence Duncan. He's done a lot to help this city. He's a fine man and I'm proud of him!'—I suppose I'm talking nonsense, Laurie, but you know what I mean."

"Yes, of course I do," he retorted. "You mean, why don't I go down there and start basketball teams and boxing classes for those kids in the Fourth Ward. Well, I don't know how."

"But you could learn," rejoined Emily, wistfully, her eyes running over his trim, muscular frame.

"I tell you, Emily, it's not in my line," he insisted.

"People said that to me but I went right ahead."

"But I'd make a fool of myself," he protested. "Everybody I know would be laughing at me!"

"They used to laugh at me. Perhaps they still do. The only difference is, I never hear them any more. They seem so—so far away." And the girl seemed to slip off into a dreamy revery.

There was a little pause. Duncan squirmed uncomfortably in his chair.

"Emily, you've been working too hard down there," he blurted out, at last. You're 'hopped' on the subject. You're morbid—really, you are. Now, listen, dear." He leaned toward her pleadingly. "Leave all those dirty people for a while and come up here where you belong."

Emily looked at him a few moments in a strangely impersonal way, as she might have appraised a stranger.

"Do you mean that?" she asked in even tones.

"Of course, I mean it!"

Again there was a short pause. The girl gazed out the window into the fading autumn day.

"Then—then," she sighed, "there's no use talking any more."

They were silent until the butler opened the door.

"Mr. Regan, madam. He says Mr. Griswold is expecting him."

Emily turned.

"Mr. Regan? Oh, yes. Put him in the reception-room until I go upstairs; then bring him in here. I'll tell Mr. Griswold. And Mr. Duncan is going."

Mitchell held the door for a moment, but as the young man gave no sign that he was in any particular hurry, the servant tactfully disappeared.

"Shindy Mike?" queried Duncan in an undertone, his hand on the knob.

"Yes, it's business," nodded Emily.  
"That's why I'm worried."

"When he walks down the street," smiled the other, "everybody turns and looks at him and—"

"Sh-h! Be quiet!" warned Emily with a smile. "He's out there in the hall. Good-bye! Come to dinner Thursday, will you, Laurie?"

"If you want me."

"I do."

"Then, of course, I'll come. God bless you, dear!" he added, huskily. And before

she knew what he was about he had taken both of her hands in his, kissed them reverently, and was gone.

Emily gathered up her furs and hat and was almost at the door when a voice from the hall arrested her.

"That's O. K. Here's a dollar fer ye," it was saying. "G'wan an' take it! All right! I'm goin' in anyway."

And "Shindy Mike" Regan appeared in the doorway. He made her a bow that he had been at some time and pains to learn from the proprietor of the Clover Leaf dance-hall. He was determined that when he did force his way into Miss Griswold's set "none o' these stuck-up mutts 'ud have anything on him."

"Pardon me, Miss Griswold," he said, a remark that was also a part of the social education aforementioned. "I thought I'd just step in an' ask how ye was feelin'." And he achieved the Clover Leaf bow once more, accompanied by a pleasant smile. At another time Miss Griswold also might have felt inclined to smile. But not now.

"I believe my father is expecting you, Mr. Regan," she said with that sweet coldness



which is used on one so far out of the pale that it is not necessary to be really chilly. "If you will wait, I'll send him down."

Regan was too much flustered to realize that this was equivalent to inviting him to get out of the doorway.

"Say, Miss Griswold," he said with a hesitating shyness that surprised and irritated him, as he took a timid half-step into the room, "would—would ye mind settin' here while I talked to ye fer a minute? I won't keep ye long."

"I'm afraid I can't, Mr. Regan," she said politely, moving to the door. "Good-afternoon."

He got out of the doorway, attempting a third bow at the same time, with the result that his feet crossed and he almost stumbled. But the girl did not smile or look back and he said, "Good-afternoon, Miss," to her back as it disappeared in the hall.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A TALK WITH THE BOSS

A MAN seldom, from his inner conviction, throws down the ladder on which he has climbed. If it has brought him success it remains, in his eyes, worthy. If he has risen by thievery he carries to his grave the conviction that his particular line of stealing is faultless, unless he be given an opportunity to reflect—in the penitentiary. The convincing argument must come from without.

Regan was tough. He had risen to wealth and power with his fist and a blackjack. The whole structure of his success rested on his innate toughness and stunted morality, coupled with the shrewdness to use both for the last dollar they would produce. He had his first shock the day he met Emily Griswold. Then he had a succession of shocks when he developed social ambitions. But he was still strong in his faith. The only difference he could see between himself and the Griswolds was that they had different "society manners" and dif-

ferent business methods. Whether theirs were better than his was a matter of opinion on which he held that he had the right to decide for himself.

But at the thought of the girl he stuck. For her he felt as much of reverence as it was possible for him to feel at that time of life, with his training and in the arrogance of a man who has risen to a great position which he has won but does not deserve. For her he was willing to make concessions without inquiring into their necessity. Hence the lessons in politeness and deportment from the proprietor of the Clover Leaf dance-hall. For the men of her family and circle—well, he would show them that one man was as good as another and that he was a little better than most by virtue of his achievements.

So on this momentous day he had made up his mind not to forget his society manners and had, as he would have said, “dolled himself up to th’ limit.” He was elaborately dressed in a morning-coat with a gardenia in his button-hole and a diamond scarf-pin that had not its equal on Washington Street, as he proudly reflected. He did not know that diamond scarf-pins were considered the height of vulgarity on Washington Street.

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He was very conscious of his sartorial grandeur and when he was left alone in the library he surveyed himself in the mirror above the mantel with much satisfaction, straightening his tie and brushing an imaginary fleck of dust off his coat-sleeve. Then he remembered the open door and threw it a sudden, nervous look to see if he had been observed. Reassured, he glanced around the room and his eyes rested on the roses. A smile of even greater satisfaction spread over his face. He was still contemplating them when Mr. Griswold entered, closely followed by his son.

"Mr. Regan," said the former, as Donald turned to close the door.

"Glad t' see ye, sir!" exclaimed Regan with a wide smile. "An' the young man, too! Glad t' see ye!" He shook two limp hands effusively.

"Sit down, Mr. Regan," said the elder Griswold, coldly, himself standing rigidly erect in the center of the room. "I don't want to take up too much of your valuable time in this matter between us."

"Aw, there's no rush," Regan assured him genially. "I got all day."

He turned away in an off-hand manner meant to indicate that he was entirely at ease

and waiting for them to begin. There was a little silence in which the Griswolds took in his costume and exchanged a glance. Surprised that no one spoke, Regan raised his eyes and intercepted the look. He was no fool. He flushed slightly and turned ugly in a moment. The society manners were forgotten. He was the tough without the veneer—Shindy Mike Regan of the Fourth.

“Well, if you two gents is so strong for business, let’s get to it,” he growled. “Ye asked me to come—here I am! What d’ye want?”

“All right, Mr. Regan,” replied Mr. Griswold, quietly, as Donald took up a position at the piano where he could rest one arm on it and watch the faces of both men. “I’ll go straight to the point. I’ve been handling all the grain that goes into this city for nearly twenty-five years. Since ’95 you’ve managed to get hold of the freight contracts. You were on the inside of dock-life. You knew how to manage these men. You could make them work for you at an impossible wage. You—well, you’ve succeeded. And now naturally you want the grain contracts, too. I’ve done my best but I’m afraid I’m too conserv-

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ative to fight the conditions you've created."

While Mr. Griswold was talking Regan lighted a huge cigar which he puffed with arrogant satisfaction. When the gentleman concluded he said calmly between puffs:

"You mean I'm a grafter an' a thief an' ye'll be damned if ye'r' one, too. Is that it?"

"You have a clear way of putting things, Mr. Regan," smiled the other. "Well, I heard to-day from the Western Amalgamated that you offered them terms which I can't possibly meet. All the smaller companies will follow Western, of course. Mr. Regan—" the voice was steady—"you've beaten me. You control the grain-handling business of the country."

Regan rocked on his feet, ran a thumb around the arm-hole of his vest and blew out an enormous cloud of smoke.

"Well, what 'r' ye goin' t' do about it?" he inquired.

"Wait just a moment." Mr. Griswold raised his hand. "I want to make the situation perfectly clear to you. For a good many years I have been rather prominent in the direction of three important savings banks and—"

"The People's Trust, the Union Deposit an' the Farmers' Loan," interrupted Regan coolly. "An' they've put up the money ye've been fightin' me with. Ye got it on securities, 't won't be worth the paper they're wrote on." Young Griswold and his father exchanged a quick look of consternation. "If ye lose that fight," Regan continued grimly, as the elder Griswold sank into a chair, "and ye have lost it, Griswold! I've smashed ye and ye know it!—ye'll file your petition within a week. There'll be a run on those banks and they'll go to hell so quick they won't know what's struck 'em. Is that it?"

Mr. Griswold moistened his dry lips and in a voice that was barely audible replied:

"That's it. How—did—you find out?"

Regan snorted. "How do I find out anyt'ing? I pound an' pay till they cough it up. See?"

"If you take over my business now you'll shake the credit of the whole State!" urged Mr. Griswold in a strained voice.

Regan grinned pityingly.

"I don't give a Bronx cocktail fer the credit o' the State!" he retorted. "The wheat's got t' be handled an' s'long's I got that I kin

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hang through any run that ever happened. An' what's more I'll make good money doin' it!"

"Mr. Regan—" began the other, half-rising.

"But you can't!" went on Regan, leaning forward with a sneer. "Say, d' ye know where a run would land you? In State's prison, with a steady job as laundry man a-washin' underwear!"

"But my securities—"

"Aw, hell!" interrupted Regan with heavy scorn. "D' ye think a jury o' reformed porch-climbers is goin' t' believe them securities any better when ye gave 'em than they are now? Hear me laugh: Ha-ha! No! Ye was a director an' ye used the bank's cash t' float yer own business, an' ye got left! That's how it'll look on the front page o' th' one-cent paper. Remember that Omaha man—what wuz his name? Kimball? Kendall? He got twenty years fer a deal enough like yourn t' be its long-lost brother! An' that was before th' days o' Collier's Weekly—Gawd bless its little soul!"

Mr. Griswold sat up stiffly in his chair as Regan dropped into another one with a laugh and a wave of the hand.



"I was inside the law!" he said sternly. "If anything happens it's only a set of circumstances. Why"—his voice rose—"I'd have cut off my hand before I—"

"Father!" interrupted Donald, warningly. It was the first word he had spoken since entering the room. His father subsided and sank back without finishing his speech.

Regan grunted contemptuously.

"Aw, go tell that to the birdies in the Park!" he scoffed. "Tain't what ye do that counts, it's what folks think ye done!"

There was a few moments' silence and then Mr. Griswold sat up again.

"Look here, Regan," he said, with an assumption of an off-hand manner. "Give me six months before taking over the Western. I have some loans coming in—I can stick it through till then! Six months!" And he leaned forward eagerly.

"Nixy! Too long!" was the prompt response.

"Four!"

"Not on your gay young life!" And Regan blew a billow of smoke at the ceiling and watched it lazily.

"One—only one!" pleaded the other desperately, getting out of his chair in a single

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spasmodic movement. "It can't hurt you! In the end you'll get the business just the same!"

"Yeah! But I think I ought t' be makin' a moral example of ye," retorted the Boss insolently. "Guy in swell position—born with silk hat—looks down on Irish upstarts—turns th' whole block into a ice-house when he meets 'em on the street—"

"Mr. Regan!" protested the other.

"Let him go on, father," interposed Donald, quietly.

"What d' ye think the depositors in them banks are goin' t' say about your principles when they hear that all their savin's have gone bla-a-h? Why, the Fourt' Ward alone's got over two thousand accounts in the People's Trust! An' it's money that come hard, too—I seen to that! Sure, they're only Irish hooligans wot wouldn't know a cream-de-menth from a grand piano, but wot 'r' ye goin' t' tell 'em, Mr. Griswold, when they up an' smash yer beak off on yer way t' jail?"

"That'll do!" commanded Mr. Griswold in a voice that wiped the sneer off Regan's lips.

"Yes, Regan, I guess we've had enough," said Donald, grimly stepping forward.

Regan glanced from one to the other of the set faces of the two men advancing upon him and he felt a twinge of envy and admiration. These "stuck-up Mutts could stand the gaff, all right," he mentally noted. He could walk out of that house and break them and send one of them to the penitentiary but "they wouldn't let him get gay with 'em." But he had not come there with the intention of gloating and going away to his vengeance, though it is likely that is what he would have done if he had not long ago formed another plan.

He stepped back a pace before the threatening advance and raised his hand. A smile of heart-felt good-fellowship lighted up his face.

"Aw, gee!" he said, half-shamefacedly, "th' trouble with you patent-leather slobs is ye can't tell a joke when ye get it in the eye! Now, I'm not tryin' t' do you—I'm not, s' 'elp me Gawd! Wot d' ye say t' a compromise?"

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BOSS PROPOSES

**F**OR nearly five seconds the others stood rigid with astonishment. The elder Griswold was first to find his voice.

"Compromise!" he exclaimed, eagerly.

"Sure!" declared the Boss, sinking easily into a chair and crossing one leg over the other. "Wot d'ye say to a bunch-up o' the two firms?"

"Bunch-up!" echoed Mr. Griswold. His son did not speak; he was watching Regan's face through narrowing lids.

"Sure!" repeated Regan, genially. "Take hold good an' hard, spit on 'em and squeeze 'em together an' out she comes—'Regan, Griswold and Company!' No! Damn it, yer gettin' to be an old man so the drinks 's on me—'Griswold, Regan and Co.! Contractors!'—There! How does she sound?"

The Griswolds exchanged glances of utter, blank amazement.

"Amalgamation?" muttered the elder as if he could not believe what he had heard.

"That's it," nodded the Boss, "but my mouth's too full o' teeth t' say it."

Donald, his face twisted with a spasm of rage, turned away and strode to the other end of the room. His father stood rigid and stared while Regan went on with growing enthusiasm.

"Gee! Could we give this town a hunch—you and me? I wonder! You'd supply th' polish an' the style, talk it up big with all th' church members an' firs' families! An' meantime I'd be around in th' backyard wit' my coat off a-doin' th' *work!*"

Mr. Griswold stared at him and as the enormity of the insult came fully upon him the color left his lips.

"You mean," he said slowly, apparently enunciating each word with difficulty, "you mean the new firm would be run by you, according to your present successful standards, while I'd be in front to keep people from examining too closely into what you were doing. Is that it?"

"Right in the bull's eye!" exclaimed the Boss, heartily. "Well?"

"You can't do it, father!" cried Donald, sharply, coming up from the rear of the room.

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His father clenched his fists until the nails cut deeply into the palms. Beads of perspiration stood out on his cold, white forehead.

"I know all about that," he said hoarsely, "but I must think of those small depositors who—"

"That's beyond us, father," the young man cut in determinedly. "We can't help them. But here's a man asking you to come down from the principles on which you based your life and brought us up!—to come down to his own dirty tricks! And there's only one answer to a man like that, father, and that's"—his eyes blazed and the words grated out from between his clenched teeth—"that's—the door!"

Regan bounded out of his chair.

"Oh, that's yer line o' talk, is it?" he snarled. Then he stopped, swallowed hard and shook himself as if fighting for control. "No," he said, calmly, at last, "I won't let ye get a rise out o' me—we got too much t' settle." He hesitated a moment and then went on slowly.

"Griswold," he said, taking a deep breath, "if ye come in wit' me on this, I'll let ye manage th' business any way ye like. I don't care how honest ye make it!"

Donald visibly started. His tight fists fell open and he stared round-eyed. Mr. Griswold seemed past emotion; he blinked at the speaker and breathed hard.

"Oh, we'll lose a lot o' money, o' course," continued the Boss as he noted Donald's start. "But, Gawd above us!—money ain't everything, especially," he added, with a grin, "when ye got a nice bunch o' real-estate uptown, a-ripenin' away like bananas under a dago's bed!"

Mr. Griswold walked up to him and looked straight into his face. Regan met the look with a frank and friendly smile. Donald, off to one side, eyed him suspiciously.

"Do you mean," said the older man unsteadily, "you'll be willing to take the lead from me?"

"Sure!" nodded the Boss, heartily. "I'll jump in an' give morality a good, fair 'show. After all, times is changin'," he grinned, "an' maybe it'll pay now better'n it used to."

"In—in that case," said the other, uncertainly, "I'm inclined—to say I—" He felt himself growing dizzy as the fearful strain relaxed at last, and held out his hand for support. Regan seized it in a painful grip.

"Ye'll take me up?" he cried enthusiastically.

cally. "Good! Shake on it!" He wrung the hand vigorously. "Gee! But this is a great day for Mike Regan!"

Something in the last remark quickened young Griswold's suspicion to a certainty.

"Wait a second, father!" he interposed, stepping in between them. "What's he letting us down so easy for?" He gazed at Regan who had hastily turned away. "Now he's got us nailed and he knows it!"

"Why, Donald!" exclaimed his father, reprovingly. "I don't think you quite appreciate all that Mr. Regan is offering—"

"Yes, I do," interrupted the young man, "and I don't like it—not one little bit!" His look went back to Regan. "There's something else. Why don't you lay it on the table and be done with it?"

Obviously ill at ease, Regan kept his back to the questioner and walked to the fireplace. He threw away the cigar, pulled down his coat, felt of his tie, cleared his throat and turned once more. He eyed Donald for a moment in silence.

"Ye'r a smart young feller, ain't ye?" he said, in a tone that he tried to make bantering. He was unable to bring himself to the point. "Wish I had a couple like ye in th'



office. Well—" he paused again and squared his shoulders—"ye've cailed my bluff and I don't mind showin' my hand."

But apparently he did, for there was another silence.

"Go on, Mr. Regan," urged Mr. Griswold, taking a chair.

"The whole thing—mind!" commanded the young man, peremptorily.

Once more Regan hesitated, but at last he began, his embarrassment growing with each word.

"It's hard t' say somehow," he said, struggling with his very limited classical vocabulary for the proper words. "I dunno why it should be. Ye see, Mr. Griswold, I didn't care nothin' about squaring t'ings this way when I started in t' grab yer business."

'Go on," commanded young Griswold, as Regan hesitated again.

"But I've been thinkin' now I'd like to make up good an' close t' ye, 'cause—" Once more speech failed him.

"Well? Because what?" demanded the young man, sharply.

Regan caught his breath and blurted the rest of it out.

"'Cause I want t' ask yer daughter if by

any chance she'd mind bein'—Mrs. R.!"

"What!" gasped Mr. Griswold, sinking back in his chair.

"Marry me—that's wot!" And Regan threw up his head defiantly.

For a moment the other two were paralyzed. Stupefaction held them speechless and moveless. Regan felt only a sense of relief that he had at last been able to say what he wanted and he waited his answer with something like confidence. His pride and his courage upheld him.

But the moment of paralysis passed and young Griswold leaped at the Boss with an oath.

"This is the finishing touch!"

Before the two men could come together, or rather before Griswold could reach the other, his father was between them.

"I tell ye it's yer only chance!" snarled Regan, with an ugly glare at Donald Griswold's rage-distorted face. The young man struggled to get past his father. But the elder man pressed him back and turned to the Boss.

"That's all, Mr. Regan," he said, curtly, with a nod toward the door. "Don't let us keep you."

Rage, disappointment, the bursting of his

childish pride made Regan's face a study and stripped him of everything that was artificial. In a second he was once more the thug of the Fourth Ward.

"Aw, ye t'ink ye'r' hell, don't ye?" he sneered as he swaggered up and down before the fireplace.

"Get out of that door!" roared young Griswold.

Somehow, Regan felt that the swagger was not making much of an impression and this added to his rage.

"I'll learn ye, ye bunch of stuck-up high-brows!" he snarled, his lips curling back from his strong white teeth. "I'll learn ye that I'm It and ye'r' Nit!"

Young Griswold controlled himself and his temper. He was ashamed as he compared his own conduct with the cold, high-bred manner in which his father dismissed Regan as one whose position and character rendered him incapable of insulting a Griswold. His anger gave way to the contempt that he knew his father felt.

"We know what you can do, Regan," he said, calmly, "and you can go and do it. But," he added with a note of quiet menace,

"if you are not gone within one minute I'll call the butler and have him kick you down the front steps!"

Regan instinctively attempted to model himself on these two, but a slightly lowered voice was all he achieved.

"I came here wid a proposition," he declared doggedly, "an' two hundred bloody butlers couldn't bounce me out before I gets me answer!"

"You've got it, Mr. Regan," said Mr. Griswold quietly, motioning him to the door.

"Not from her!" snarled the Boss. Donald's figure grew tense and he held himself with an effort.

"Don't you dare say her name!" came in a low voice from between his set jaws.

Regan almost felt like weeping. What was there in the manner, the tone, the eyes of these two men that baffled and bore down on him?

"Why not?" he cried, his voice almost a whine. "Damn it! Ain't I askin' her to marry me?"

"You damned—" Griswold leaped for him but stopped short. The door opened swiftly and Emily stood before them.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GIRL DISPOSES

“**D**AD, has—?” Emily began, cheerily, but stopped abruptly on seeing Regan. “Oh, I beg your pardon! I thought you and Don were alone.”

Her father nodded. “Mr. Regan is leaving, dear, in just a few moments,” he said pointedly.

“Go away, Emily—please!” added her brother, curtly. She had scarcely made a move to obey when Regan’s voice sounded. The “society” manner and bow were gone, but there was a note of apology and manly respect in his tone. His anger had fled at the sight of her and he saw dimly how her father and brother regarded him—saw the bargain he had attempted to drive with them in a faintly new light. For the first time in his life Mike Regan felt a twinge of shame. But it was not enough to turn him from his purpose.

“Pardon me, Miss Griswold, but d’ ye mind

comin' in fer a minute and shuttin' the door?  
I got somethin'—"

"That'll do, dear," Mr. Griswold interrupted sharply. "We'll excuse you."

"Go away, Emily!" commanded her brother impatiently.

"Will ye come in an' sit down?" asked Regan, ignoring the other two and never taking his eyes off the girl's face.

She looked from one to another of the three faces around her and hesitated.

Regan spoke again, more gently than he had ever before addressed man, woman or child:

"I'm askin' ye t' sit down."

Again Emily hesitated and glanced at the three men. Evidently there was some tragedy back of this situation—and had she not a short time before declared that she was one of the family with a right to attend its councils? She crossed the threshold, moved over to an easy-chair and sat stiffly upright on the edge of it.

"Well, of all the—!" foamed Donald. "Emily! Dad and I don't want you here! We've said so twice and—"

"I guess I'm th' one t' do th' talkin'," Re-

gan interrupted coolly. He drew himself up before the girl.

"Listen t' me, Miss Griswold."

Emily glanced up at him with lifted brows.

"I'm listening, Mr. Regan," she replied, quietly.

Donald Griswold was not without a sense of humor and the situation was so ridiculous, so amazing, that he could not bring himself to interfere by violence until it was too late.

Shindy Mike Regan proposing to Emily Griswold in the presence of her father and brother! He almost laughed and felt of his head as if to assure himself that the scene was real. Mr. Griswold had no such feelings. He simply concluded that it would be better in the interests of decency to let Regan have his answer from Emily than to call the servants and have the Boss thrown bodily out of the house, with the attendant risk of the girl's name being dragged into the papers.

"I ain't seen ye more'n four times," Regan was saying, with much hesitation, "but I'm no horse-car when it comes t' makin' up my mind. I'm thirty-eight years old an' never had a sick day in my life, 'cept when some guy's laid me

out scrappin' an' mostly I c'n say it's been th' other way round. I drink now an' then, but havin' been a barkeeper when young, I know t' a finger how much I c'n carry an' I never throw in any more. I never gamble nor play the races, fer the simple reason they seem kind o' slow 'longside o' my business."

Donald nodded in satirical agreement.

"And I never got mixed up with women o' any size or color," continued the Boss, "'cause I been on th' jump, I s'pose, an' they tell me women takes a lot o' time. But now I'm gettin' along an' I've made my pile—an'—an'—I feel like settlin' down an' havin' someone pour my coffee in th' mornin' an' put my slippers on th' steam-heater at night." He paused and wiped his forehead.

"You mean—?" said Emily, hiding her amusement under a pretense of interest.

"I guess you're wise," commented the Boss, with a long sigh of relief. "I want t' marry ye."

"To get a social position for his dirty politics!" added Donald, biting.

Regan took two steps forward, a dark flush of anger spreading over his face.

"Young feller," he said, with an ugly glare,



"I c'n put this through without no buttin' in! —un'erstand?"

Before the young man could reply he had turned again to Emily and resumed his respectful tone.

"Ye could help me, Miss Griswold, an' I ain't ashamed t' say it. But—but that ain't the reason—why—why—I want ye—" His voice grew lower and lower and his speech more uncertain until it ceased entirely.

Emily looked up at him and the corners of her mouth twitched.

"Isn't it, Mr. Regan?" she said, calmly. "Suppose you tell me, then, what is."

He drew a step closer to her chair and leaned over her.

"I—I—love yeh—I do," he stammered huskily. And then with an effort he drew himself up. "Well, that's why," he added, gently.

Emily shrank back a little and the feeling of amusement gave way to a thick thrill of fear. For in his eyes and voice she read that in so far as it was possible for this man to love he had spoken the truth.

Donald's bitterly ironical voice broke the silence.

"Yes, and he's offered to buy you. He's got us right against the wall and he says he'll let us go—he's offered father a partnership, promised to back him up in everything—"

"What!" exclaimed the girl.

"And it's all on condition that we pass you over—like a Van Dyke portrait for that man to hang on his wall!"

Emily rose with a little smile. Regan had turned his back to her. She crossed the room, rested her hand on her father's shoulder and held out the other to her brother.

"Dear old Dad! Don!" she exclaimed softly. "If we're going to the poor-house, then, at least, we'll make a family party of it."

Donald gripped her hand in an ecstasy of triumph and wrung it again and again.

"Ah, I knew you'd say that!" he shouted. "We can't help a smash-up! It's not our fault if the banks go under!"

"Banks go under!" she echoed, startled.

"And anyway, Regan," went on her brother, "there's no use your staying on here now—so move along there! And be quick about it!"

"Banks—go under? What do you mean?" demanded Emily, facing her brother. Donald, cursing himself for the slip that gave her

an idea of the true situation, tried to bluster it through and get Regan out of the way before she could force a complete explanation.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't bother, dear!" he cried. "It's all right. You can't do anything, anyway! Come! Get out of here, Regan!"

"But I don't understand!" she protested.

Regan, his back still to the company, did not move.

"And I want to, Don—I intend to!" she insisted.

"Oh, drop it, dear, please!"

"Dad?" she appealed to her father.

"Now, father!" warned the young man.

"Wait until later, Emily," said her father, gently. The girl glanced from one to the other and then walked determinedly up to the Boss.

"Mr. Regan," she said, "do you know anything about this?"

Regan wheeled. "I know the whole blamed thing," he replied, briefly.

"Then tell me, please," she commanded.

"Don't listen to him, dear!" interrupted Donald, frantically. "He's got it all wrong and—"

"Oh, have I?" Regan cut in, grimly. "I don't know 'bout that!" He turned to the girl and their eyes met. "Your father's borrowed money from three big savin's banks. He just happened t' be a director in 'em all. When he goes bankrupt that'll start a run. They'll stop payment."

"Stop payment!" echoed Emily.

Don tried to interrupt but she silenced him with a gesture.

"Yeah!" resumed the Boss. "An' all them scoopers o' mine that ye'r' so stuck on—they'll lose ev'ry bit o' dough they managed t' scrape t'gether."

"You don't mean—?" she began. She was white to the lips.

"Sure!" he nodded cheerfully. "They got their cash in the People's Trust—the steady ones, I mean. It's the only savin's bank the Fourt' Ward patronizes. Well, it's just that cash o' theirs yer pa here borrowed an' if he can't pay it back—why, they get left! See?"

For a few moments there was absolute silence. The three men held their breath. The girl was mistress of the situation. At last she turned to her father. She was white-faced but calm. She had grieved for years because she

could do so little for her people. Here was an opportunity to do something big—and at the same time save the honor of their name. Afterward it seemed to her that years had passed in those few seconds.

“Is this true, Dad?” she asked, in a low voice.

Her father stirred anxiously in his seat.

“In a measure, yes, but—”

“And all these people are going to lose their money?”

He averted his eyes as she moved slowly toward him.

“There—may be,” he began, hesitatingly, “some difficulties—I don’t deny—”

“But, Daddy, dear,” she interrupted gently, bending tenderly over him, “they have so little! It means everything! And we—why, we’re responsible, don’t you see?”

Mr. Griswold rallied himself by an effort and spoke defensively in his “business” voice.

“It’s a tremendous misfortune as far as they go,” he said. “Yet I acted with the strictest honesty and I don’t—”

But Emily had turned her back and was once more facing the man who held the fate of all of them in his hands.

"Isn't there anything else you will take?" she asked, a gentle, pleading note in her voice. "Won't you offer the partnership on any other basis."

"I guess not!" retorted Regan, coolly, his toughness rising with his triumph. "Wot would I be gettin'?"

Donald sprang forward from the rear of the room whither he had retired to fume and curse over his blunder.

"Partnership!" he cried with fury, "D' you think father would consider for a minute any—?"

"He's right," Emily interrupted, addressing herself to Regan. "Father won't do it now. But would you be satisfied with half the grain companies, putting the other half entirely in his hands? Would you promise to go ahead under that arrangement and leave him absolutely alone?"

"Yeah!" he responded promptly. "But wot about me?" He threw an uneasy glance at young Griswold's menacing face. He had acquired respect for that young gentleman in the past hour which he did not like to admit even to himself. "Will him and that young feller promise t' leave me alone?"

Emily drew herself up and her eyes flashed.

"Mr. Regan I think you can rely on my family's doing the honest thing!" she declared haughtily.

The Boss hesitated for a bare instant.

"All right!" he said, with an air of finality. "I'll give 'em half. That's square! Is it a deal now? D' ye take me up?"

For a moment there was a frightened, hunted look in the girl's eyes as she glanced wildly about the room.

"I've got to!" she cried, clenching her fists as if struggling to hold herself. "There's nothing else for me to do!"

"Emily!" gasped her brother, utterly appalled. "Don't be a fool!"

"Do you know what you're saying, my child?" cried her father, aghast.

"Put it there, Miss! Put it there an' shake!" broke in Regan, holding out his thick-palmed, muscular hand. There was a world of rough tenderness in his voice and his eyes were not quite dry. With a little shiver Emily laid her hand in his.

"My dear!" exclaimed her father hoarsely.

"For heaven's sake, Emily, think who you

are!" cried Donald, frantically waving his clenched fists.

"I can't!" cried the girl, facing them, desperately. "All I can think of is the men who have their hard-earned little accounts in those banks! You haven't seen their wives and children!—you don't know the misery they're struggling under! But I've seen it!—I know! And if there's anything I can do to keep those pitiful little families from going to pieces and giving up, I'll do it! I don't care what it is! And nothing that you or father or anybody else can say is going to stop me!"

A tense silence of a second or two followed the girl's impassioned speech. Then her brother walked swiftly up to Regan.

"You hear that?" he said, his voice low with deadly menace. "Tell her you don't want her! Tell her you won't take her! You tell her that or I'll—!"

Regan eyed him calmly from the height of his victory.

"Aw, g'wan!" he said contemptuously. "You smoke too many cigarettes."

"You damned—!" shrieked the young man, springing forward with fist poised. Regan



leaped back and set himself for the shock, but the elder Griswold seized his son's arm.

"Donald, Donald, keep quiet!" he pleaded. "The servants!"

The young man's strained figure relaxed. He shook himself and swallowed hard. Then he went on bitterly:

"I can see it all now! You've cooked this whole thing up! You've been meeting her on the sly, trying to carry on an affair! You knew we'd never let you marry her, so you got a strangle-hold on father's business and then you think you've got us gagged and bound!"

This time it was Regan who sprang forward, his face flaming with passion.

"You cut that now!" he snarled. He was not as bad as that, he told himself. Possibly his sudden rage meant the birth-pains of a conscience. The two men, their muscles tense, stood with their faces less than a foot apart. But young Griswold was strong in his training. He put his hands behind his back and went on in the same low voice.

"Don't think I'm afraid of you, Regan, because I'm not. And now I tell you right between the eyes that if you go on with this

dirty scheme to get hold of my sister, I'll—" He paused.

"Well? Wot'll you do?" demanded the Boss, insolently.

"Wait and see," was the ominous conclusion. Again Regan felt an uneasy thrill of respect for his foeman. It was his eyes that first gave up the battle of glances and he turned away with a growl. Emily stepped forward.

"Remember, Don," she said, warningly, "if Mr. Regan doesn't interfere with you, you can't interfere with him. That's settled!"

He wheeled on her desperately.

"Emily, you're crazy. Give it up!"

"I can't!"

"D'you realize what you're doing? You're choosing between us—yes, you are!" He drew himself up beside his father. "It's Dad and I against this man!"

"I'm not choosing!" she cried, passionately, going toward them with outstretched hands.

"Oh, Don, dear, can't you see?"

"I can see—"

"Quit pickin' at her now!" interrupted Regan truculently, advancing between them.

"I've stood here long enough a-listenin' to

yer gab an' if that's the line o' talk ye hand her out at home, I don't blame her fer wantin' t' beat it!—Gee!" He retired and leaned an arm on the piano, as no one seemed to be disposed to argue the point with him. "The only thing that jolts me is that she ain't skipped before!"

Young Griswold kept his self-control and his glance ran slowly over the Boss from head to foot.

"Come along, father. I've had enough of this," he said, and started for the door. Half-way he paused. "As for you, Emily—we'll talk about this later!" And he passed out into the hall with a last deadly look at Regan, still leaning nonchalantly on the piano.

"Don't let me keep ye!" Regan called to him, with happy facetiousness.

Mr. Griswold rose and started to follow his son.

"Coming, dear?" he asked his daughter, with quiet dignity.

"No," replied the girl, in a low, steady voice; "I have several things to talk over with—Mr. Regan."

"Then I'll stay," said her father, quietly, and made as if to resume his chair.

The girl made a little gesture of protest.

"Please—don't," she said, with difficulty. Her father's figure stiffened perceptibly.

"You mean," he said, slowly, "I'd be in the way?"

Her head was bowed and her eyes were on the floor.

"Yes," she half-whispered. He started and his lips moved twice without a sound. He could barely see her through a mist of tears.

"I—I'm—sorry!" He walked quickly out the door and shut it behind him without another glance at her.

For a moment or two after the door had closed the girl stood as her father had left her. It seemed to her as if he had shut the door on all that had been and all that her girlhood dreams had planned. From this moment on she must be a pariah—without the father she idolized, without the brother she loved, without a home, without caste, without friends, without hope—joyless of heart and dead of soul!

She ran a few steps toward the door.

"Daddy! Daddy!" she sobbed.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LAST OF THE ROSES

EMILY stood with her hands pressed to her face, choking, until Regan came so near that he might have touched her. But he was awed by this sudden storm of grief.

"I'm awfully sorry fer ye, Miss," he said, a trifle huskily, yet with clumsy tenderness. "But they'll come round if ye sit tight. They always do an'—"

He stopped abruptly as the girl dropped her hands and faced him. Her face was damp with tears and pale but it wore a set, determined look. Her eyes met his bravely, though one shoulder leaned against the frame of the doorway as if she hoped to draw moral support from the hard, strong wood.

"Before we go any further I must make you understand one thing," she said, in a curiously strained voice. "I don't care for you—I feel quite sure I never can. We've got to face that fact together—you and I."

"Well?" he said, in a low voice. He could

see the pulse beat in the smooth, white throat.

She moistened her lips and spoke again. "I'll keep my word—I'll marry you," she went on. Her voice was unnaturally steady and high. "But if I do, it's with the understanding that everything—stops at the church door. I won't really be your wife. I just can't! That's all there is to it—I can't!—No, wait till I've finished," as he opened his lips. "You were perfectly right when you called it a deal. I'll help you with my position, I'll do my best for you that way—"

"Aw, quit it!" growled Regan, in a pained undertone. He turned abruptly away from her, his face a rich, heavy crimson.

The girl closed her eyes but stuck doggedly to her ultimatum.

"—and in return you'll let go my father. I'm perfectly above board, perfectly clear—just an everyday bargain. If you want me—on that basis, remember!—why, you can have me!" She swallowed once or twice and breathed hard. Then she opened her eyes.

"Well?" she questioned.

The Boss passed a hand over his smoothly combed hair and his face suddenly broke into a half-sheepish grin.

"That's a pretty sharp offer yer makin' me," he said. "But—I don't care." He walked up to her and smiled a friendly smile. "I'll close with it now!"

"You don't mean," gasped Emily, "you'll take those terms?"

He nodded cheerfully.

"I take what I c'n get—see? Then I get a little more!"

The girl backed away from him with a quick shiver. "You won't—this time!" she said in a low, half-frightened voice.

"I'll run the chanst!" he replied lightly.

Emily brought herself to a semblance of coolness.

"Very well," she said. "Then there's nothing more to be said." She paused a moment and went on. "My family are going to make trouble so I think we had better finish it up as soon as we—conveniently can."

"I'll get th' license t'-night," Regan assured her in a brisk, businesslike manner. "We'll be married the first thing in th' mornin'! That suit ye?"

"Could you make it in the afternoon—about three?" she asked, with forced calmness. She

was fighting to hold herself. "I have a luncheon engagement."

"Three!" he nodded, promptly. "I'll have everything O. K. an' meet ye on th' steps o' St. Patrick's at five minutes to."

Then panic gripped her suddenly. She rushed to him and almost threw herself in his arms. "Mr. Regan—Mr. Regan," she gasped, wildly, "change your mind!—don't do it!—Let me off!—please, *oh, please—*"

In an instant she was struggling in his arms.

"I won't!" he panted, between his teeth. "I won't let ye off! I won't—"

With the strength of despair she broke away from him in time to prevent his lips from touching her face. But the struggle steadied her nerves.

"Remember!" she warned, backing away from him with a shudder. He made a half-step to follow her and stopped abruptly. She could hear the sharp hiss of his breath as he drew it in, struggling with an all but overmastering desire.

"All right," he said, at last, huskily. "It's three sharp, then?"



A numbness was stealing over the girl's mind.

"Three sharp," she echoed in a dull voice.

"Don't keep me waitin'," he said, with a resumption of his brisk manner.

"I'm always prompt."

He seemed to wait for her to say something more but she did not speak or look in his direction and he moved slowly toward the door. There he paused and timidly returned a few steps.

"Oh, before I go," he said, with a shy smile and a youthful blush, "there's one thing I want t' thank ye fer. That rose o' mine ye'r wearin'—'twas lookin' at it kept me nerve up all th' time!"

"So it's been you!" she exclaimed, turning on him.

"Sure!" he smiled delightedly. "I thought ye'd caught on long ago!" And he once more made for the door.

"No!" she murmured, bitterly, and as he passed out her hands slowly sought the pin that held the flower. "I hadn't—caught on!" And with a dry sob she dropped the rose on the table.



WITH A DRY SOB, SHE DROPPED THE ROSE ON THE TABLE.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

2. The second part is a list of names and addresses.

3. The third part is a list of names and addresses.

4. The fourth part is a list of names and addresses.

5.

6.

7.

8.

## CHAPTER XII

### IN SIX MONTHS

**S**IX months may mean much or little in the seven-score years and ten of the life journey of men and women. To the Griswolds and the Regans it was a momentous half-year.

Emily Griswold's sudden and inexplicable marriage outdid the proverbial nine days' wonder as a sensation in the city. The whole population in every walk of life talked of little else for weeks. Few even guessed at the real reason behind the strange alliance and they kept their suspicions strictly to themselves. If any shrewd newspapermen arrived at the true explanation they never dared hint at it on the printed pages in the face of certain disaster to follow offending the powerful Boss and the equally powerful rulers of Washington Street. So one more "good story" was still-born, as many another one has been when Mammon stretched forth his hand.

Even the fact that Mrs. Michael Regan's name seldom appeared "among those present"

in the social activities of Washington Street at last failed to arouse comment. Her world dropped her and the outside world began to forget that she had ever belonged in the inner circle.

Regan kept his word. In his long career as a politician he had seldom failed to do so when it was given in sober earnest. That was one of the reasons why he gained and held his power over men. He divided the grain business fairly between his firm and the Griswolds. The rate war stopped, much to the disgust of the Western grain-shippers.

Long before the end of six months the Griswolds were in a position to give Regan a harder fight than he had ever been through before, even if it had occurred to him to resort to treachery and declare war once more. But it did not. He kept faith. Then it was that Donald Griswold began his campaign of reprisals. He and his father tried in vain to persuade Emily to leave her husband in the first few weeks after her sensational marriage. They were unable to shake her. Failing here, young Griswold set out to "make good" on the warning he had given Regan in the library in Washington Street that memorable afternoon.

And Regan learned that his forebodings were well-founded.

To the letters Emily wrote her brother, reminding him that she had pledged the honor of the family, neither he nor his father made any reply. The elder Mr. Griswold did not approve of the young man's plan, but he was forced to admit that the latter was bound by no pledged word. He had fought "the deal" to the last stand.

Young Griswold began a quiet campaign among the scoopers who handled Regan's grain. He pointed out, for the most part through agents, that the Griswold men were better paid and better cared for. It was as he had said—like touching a match to a magazine. Unions leaped into well-organized being in forty-eight hours and when the movement had once gained headway Griswold took the field in the open. The decent citizens of the town supported him to a man.

A week later the city was in a furore. The Boss was assailed on every side. His political enemies plotted more boldly than they had ever dared before. His business was crippled. He brought in strike-breakers and they deserted to the union forces by scores. The

churches raised a strikers' fund. Of all the friends that remained faithful to him, none but his "guerrillas" dared come out openly and take his side in the strike. It was too plainly a fight of decency and right against greed and oppression. It was a terrible winter and the suffering of the poor was indescribable. He was blamed for this.

But the Boss was unshaken. While the storm raged and howled about him and his enemies looked hourly for his surrender he lost no whit of his confident swagger. He had never lost a fight and he did not understand defeat. But within there was a gnawing pain that hurt far worse than the blows of battle.

As he had kept faith with the Griswolds, so had he kept faith with the girl. Their marriage ceased to be a marriage when they came down the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral. She entertained his friends and formed a little society of those who were not quite "in" and those who might have been had they been a little different personally. She was ever thoughtful for his comfort and managed their costly home faultlessly. She tried gently to smooth down his rough exterior. She guided him into the outer paths of the unexplored

labyrinth of books. But she never admitted him to anything like companionship.

Regan saw and understood. And his love and reverence grew with his understanding, but the pain at his heart kept pace with both. As what little of the spiritual there was in him developed somewhat under her care he began to see dimly that she could not be his mate; he secretly admitted the fact to himself. There was no need to prepare the nursery. There could never be an heir to the house of Regan. But he would not let himself give up.

The girl knew well what he was merely beginning to realize; and her pain was greater than his. She had lost her own world and had become a lonely stranger in a new one. Maternity, which sometimes works miracles, was denied a woman of her high soul where she did not love—completely and overwhelmingly.

Between the two was an impregnable wall far stronger than the never-opened door between their apartments. And the name of that wall was Caste.



## CHAPTER XIII

### A QUESTION OF TASTE

REGAN stood the small-talk at the dinner table as long as he could; then he slipped away unobtrusively and sought the library. Mrs. Regan was giving one of her little dinners and the Boss was growing proud of the way in which he "c'd hold up his end." But there always came a time when he felt that he had to go off somewhere and swear at a servant and talk naturally.

A little platform opened off the dining-room door into the library with a short flight of steps leading down to the floor. It was Emily's idea and with the big Dutch fire-place off to the right gave a very artistic effect to the room. The rest of the library showed the signs of a contest between good taste and desire for a lavish display of money—with the result about a draw.

Here Regan found Davis, his secretary, at work. The latter was a quiet, industrious young man and with considerable education,

## A QUESTION OF TASTE 139

who knew his chief and loved him for the bit of good he knew lay hidden beneath the hard exterior.

Regan was expecting an ultimatum from the strike committee and his first inquiry was for that. He expected also a report from Porky McCoy but he did not mention this. He was told there was no word as yet and turned lightly to other things.

"Well, I got through another dinner, Davis," he said genially, strolling about the room. "I'm gettin' better ev'ry day. They'll have me smokin' cigarettes, first thing I know. We got a swell bunch here t'night. Gee! It makes me sweat t' talk t' 'em. Thought I'd just sneak in here fer a minute t' cool down." He paused in front of the book-shelves. "Well, I suppose I might as well be gettin' back on my book job."

The secretary smiled and rummaged through some papers.

"Yes, I'm gettin' literary," continued the Boss. He indicated with both hands a stretch of several feet of handsomely bound volumes. "I've read from there to there," he said proudly. "Wot are ye after?"

"I'm hunting for that interview with young

Griswold, in the *Record-Times*," replied the young man without looking up from the search.

"G'wan!" sniffed the Boss. "I used that t' light a cigar!"

"All right, sir," said Davis rising. "Then I'm through for the night."

"Go home an' get some sleep," ordered his chief kindly. "Ye need sleep when we got a big scrap on like this."

"That's what my wife says, too," nodded Davis, with a smile, from the doorway.

"Say!" The young man paused. "How's the kids?" asked Regan, with evident interest.

"Fine, sir! The new school's exactly what they needed." He paused and went on nervously, returning a few steps. "We—we never can thank you the way you ought to be thanked—"

"Aw, rats!" interrupted Regan, gruffly, dropping both hands heavily on his secretary's shoulders. "Now don't begin on that again! I didn't do nothin' but sign a check an'—"

He broke off and his arms dropped as a handsomely gowned young woman appeared on the platform by the dining-room door.

"I saw you escaping, Mr. Regan," she said,

in a pleasant, well-bred voice, "and I just made up my mind I wouldn't let you."

With a hasty "good night," Davis disappeared into the hall as the host turned to the lady with a smile and a half-bow.

"Well, ye see, Mrs. Cuyler," he explained, "I'm expectin' a visit from one o' them strikers. They're a-sendin' me wot they call their union ultimatum."

"The strike? Oh, how exciting!" she exclaimed as she came slowly down the stairs and sank, with a sweep of her train, into a big chair. She was one of those sprightly, outspoken women who love to skip lightly along the edge of immorality without getting their feet wet. "I'm just back from Europe, you know," she went on brightly, "but I hear it's been the talk of the town for two months."

"Yeah!" agreed Regan proudly. "We have kept things goin' at quite a clip."

"Tell me!—how's it going to end?" she demanded, leaning toward him eagerly. "Will you up and crush your brother-in-law or will he up and crush you? Oh, I do hope somebody's crushed!"

"Then ye'd better get out yer handkerchief fer him," grinned Regan, walking leisurely

over to a humidior on the center-table. "They didn't call me Shindy Mike fer nothin'. I never got licked by a bunch o' scoopers before an' I guess I'm too old t' begin now."

Mrs. Cuyler clapped her hands ecstatically.

"That's splendid! Keep it up!" she exclaimed.

Regan's grin changed to a rather sheepish complexion.

"Aw, yer kiddin' me," he said.

"No, I'm not." And Mrs. Cuyler shook her pretty head earnestly. "I don't think I'd dare. I've always been so afraid of you, Mr. Regan. I believe you were the original bogey man that my nurse used to frighten me with when I wouldn't go to sleep, long ago. But now I've seen you, I'm disappointed because you're not a bogey at all but just—" She hesitated and paused.

"Well? Cut her loose!" suggested Regan, amiably, a long, black cigar gripped in the molars of the right side of his jaw.

"A man! A rather bad man, I suppose," she added, doubtfully. "But—oh, dear!—that only makes me envy Emily the more."

The Boss looked his blank amazement.

"Envy her!" he echoed.

## A QUESTION OF TASTE 143

"There's so much she can do to help you, Mr. Regan," she explained. "And the men we help most are the men we love best—after all."

The man looked down at the desk for a moment in silence.

"Help me? I wish she would!" he said, in low, fervent tones, as if more to himself than his listener. "I want t' be helped—an' I wouldn't mind a little lovin', too."

Mrs. Cuyler nodded cheerfully. "Give her time, Mr. Regan," she admonished him. "Emily's a wonderful girl, even if she is a snob!"

"A snob!" repeated the Boss, bristling.

"Yes, morally, I mean," explained the woman. "And on the whole, you're such a shady character I don't blame the poor dear if she's mixed up at the start!"

Regan nodded thoughtfully without a trace of offense.

"No, I don't blame her neither," he said, slowly; "not when I stop t' think."

There was a little silence which Mrs. Cuyler broke.

"It is rather hard on her, you know," she

said reflectively, "having you swear at that wretched butler before all the guests."

Regan drew himself up in offended dignity.

"Why, I only did it twice!" he protested.

"Twice!"

"Well, I guess that's somethin'!" he maintained, defensively. "Gee! I used to cuss him ev'ry time he passed me th' pertaters!" And he chewed his cigar as an outlet for his emotions.

"Oh, dear!" laughed the woman, hopelessly. Then she added in a serious tone: "Mr. Regan, will you do something for me?"

"Wot d'ye want?" he demanded, looking at her with some suspicion.

"Be humane. Light that cigar and kill it quickly. Don't torture it any more."

Regan removed the offending weed from his jaw and walked to the fireplace.

"I guess you think I can't be decent even to a piece o' tobacco!" he laughed.

"Well, Mr. Regan, you really are a very black sheep," she reminded him, settling comfortably back into her chair. "Do you know I could hardly make my husband come to dine with you to-night? He said he wanted to go to that big mass-meeting. It's quite

true. I had to be unusually firm with him!"

"Poor feller!" the Boss commented grimly. "Tell him he c'n go t' th' meetin' later on an' yell, 'T' hell wit' Regan!' all th' louder fer havin' lapped up my champagne."

"And your old friend, the Archbishop," continued Mrs. Cuyler in the same tone, as he came and stood over her. "Emily told me he was taken ill at the last moment so he couldn't come. But I don't believe it, Mr. Regan, do you? I think he was annoyed because your men broke into the union saloon this afternoon and sort of 'accidentally' killed the proprietor."

Regan looked at her in puzzled curiosity.

"Well, it don't seem to bother you much," he suggested.

"Oh, nothing ever bothers me!" returned Mrs. Cuyler, lightly. "You see, I'm just a fan. I never get right down and play. But from the grandstand I see most of the fine points of the game. And that's why, Mr. Regan, you and Emily are very near my heart to-night."

Before the Boss could frame any comment on this view of life the austere butler appeared at the doorway.



"Beg pardon, Madam," he said, stiffly, "but Mr. Cuyler is leaving. Mrs. Regan asked me to tell you." He disappeared as noiselessly as he had come.

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed sharply. "Why, it's barely nine!—Oh, well!" she sighed. And then to Regan: "Aren't husbands bores?"

The strains of a plaintive, yearning melody gan knew that touch on the piano and he floated gently in from the music-room. Returned away from the woman.

"I s'pose," he said uncertainly, "I s'pose we are!"

"No, not you!" declared Mrs. Cuyler decidedly. "You're a lot of things but—I think there's no danger of your boring anyone. You know, Mr. Regan," she continued, as if she had settled down to spend the evening, "I must be fearfully immoral. I enjoy so much what I entirely disapprove of—you, for instance! Now, Emily can't do that—never could. It seems too bad and yet—yet I somehow think it's going to be the making of you both."

Regan had apparently not been following the latter part of this speech for he ap-

proached his guest, and with some diffidence said:

"Mrs. Cuyler, would ye mind helpin' me do somethin'?"

"What is it?" she inquired, looking up with a smile.

He shyly produced two jeweler's boxes out of his trouser-pockets and handed her the larger one.

"Tell me which one o' these she'd like best."

Mrs. Cuyler opened the box and gasped.

"What's this? A frog! A diamond frog, with ruby eyes!"

Regan grinned with delight.

"I picked that out!" he declared proudly. "Sort o' cute, ain't he? Kind o' natural? Pipe his leg there! O' course, live frogs are green, with spots all over 'em but that don't make no difference when 't comes to joolry, does it?"

Mrs. Cuyler should have received the Carnegie medal for her heroic rescue of herself from a dangerous fit of laughter.

"Not a bit!" she agreed, enthusiastically. "I think he's sweet! What's the other?"

"Aw, just a pearl ring!" he replied, contemptuously, passing her the box. "Th' man

at th' store was nutty over it but—gee! It seems kind o' cheap t' me, 'longside th' other!"

"It's beautiful!" exclaimed the woman, in sincere admiration.

"Well, I'm strong for the di'mon's, speakin' for meself!" Regan maintained stoutly, after a moment's hesitation. "They give th' wealthy look, an' ain't that wot everybody's after?"

Mrs. Cuyler studied the two ornaments for a few moments and seemed to be thinking rapidly.

"Mr. Regan!" she exclaimed, at last.

"Yeah?"

"I'd give her the one you chose yourself," she declared, handing the boxes back to him. "I'd give her the frog!"

Regan's face lighted up with pleasure.

"All right, I will!" he said, heartily.

Mrs. Cuyler rose and made ready to leave.

"What is it—her birthday?" she inquired.

"Naw! We was married six months ago t' day," he explained, in a lowered voice, avoiding the woman's eyes. "I just want her t' know I remembered—that's all. . . Listen!" he went on, a strangely soft note in his voice, as he called attention to the music. "It kind

## A QUESTION OF TASTE 149

o' makes me homesick fer some place I've never been."

Mrs. Cuyler, from the foot of the stairs, looked at his face and understood. "You will, Mr. Regan, before so very long," she said, softly. "Good-bye! And—God bless you, Shindy Mike!"

She gave him a swift smile, waved her hand and passed out.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A QUESTION OF BABIES

“**I** BEG your pardon, sir!”

The music had stopped and Regan came out of his half-dreamy abstraction with a jar. He wheeled and saw the imperturbable Gates in the opposite doorway.

“That striker show up yet?” he demanded sharply.

“No, sir; it’s Mr. McCoy.”

“McCoy! Where?” Regan cried eagerly.

“There in your office, sir. He rang the bell and I thought as you—”

“What right you got to think?” snarled the Boss. “I’ll do all the thinkin’ that goes on in this house.” He turned to the door that opened into his office. “Come in here, Porky!”

Porky, looking little changed since the days of the Dip of Death save for an air of increased prosperity, indicated in his attire, entered, hat in hand.

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"May I ask, sir, if—?" the butler began timidly.

Regan cut him short with a gruff:

"Aw, go t' hell!"

"Very good, sir," replied the servant, impassively, and he faded away through the door.

"Say, Mike—" began McCoy, advancing eagerly.

"Wait a second!" interrupted the Boss, decisively. "Wot about Hurley's bar? Did ye smash it good?"

"Yeah! We put it on the blink," replied his lieutenant, impatiently. "But, Mike—"

"An' Hurley? Wot about him?" the chief interrupted once more.

"It's all right," Porky assured him, with more evident signs of impatience. "We laid him out just like ye wanted."

Regan looked his relief.

"So that's O. K.! Now, tell me why ye'r' not at St. Mary's Hall this minute, a-listenin' t' them guys like I told ye?"

Porky was plainly embarrassed.

"Say, Mike—somethin's doin'—" he stammered and stopped.

Regan eyed him with quick sternness.

"Well?"

The tone increased McCoy's embarrassment to an alarming degree. He shifted from one foot to the other and twisted his soft hat nervously in his hands.

"I jus' thought I'd—I'd drop in an' tell ye' about it on me way t' th' meetin'—"

"G'wan! Spit it out!" commanded the Boss threateningly.

McCoy passed an unsteady hand across his chin and grinned foolishly.

"My missus—" he began and stopped.

Regan read the rest in his face and started, a gleam of delight in his eyes.

"What!" he exclaimed.

McCoy was completely disguised behind a grin and blush.

"It's a boy!" he announced.

"Naw!" cried Regan, joyfully.

"Sure!" declared Porky, wriggling with delight. "He weighs nine pounds! The cutest little duck ye ever seen in all yer life!"

"An' yer good woman?" asked Regan anxiously.

"Doin' fine! Everything goin' on slick!" And Porky drew himself up as if he had per-

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sonally conducted the whole affair from the beginning.

"Say, when did it—?" Regan left the blank open.

"'Bout five o'clock," the father told him; "when I was out a-smashin' Hurley's bar, you know."

Regan held out his hand and McCoy gripped it.

"Porky, shake!" he said. And very solemnly and violently they did it. Regan dragged his visitor to the center-table where a bottle of whiskey, a siphon and some glasses reposed by the humidior. "We'll have a drop o' this to celebrate!"

"The christenin's on Sunday week," went on Porky, happily, as he watched Regan pour two drinks, "an' she said I was t' tell ye ye'd got to stand up with the kid an' leave us name him Michael R."

"I'll be a proud man that day, Porky!" the Boss declared, heartily. He extended a glass. "Now let 'er go—t' Michael Regan McCoy!"

"Michael Regan Ignatius McCoy!" Porky corrected solemnly.

"Gawd bless him!" added the other with pious earnestness. "May he grow up to be as



swell a scrapper and as fine a friend as his old man was before him!"

They tossed off the whiskey simultaneously. "I thank ye kindly, Mike," said Porky as he set down his glass. There was a pause of several seconds while they looked at each other as friends who have not met in years. It is always so with two men who are bound by close ties when a great change comes into the life of one of them.

At last Regan glanced at the dining-room doorway as if he feared being overheard and spoke in low, slightly awed and wholly curious tones.

"Say, Porky, is it true what they say?"

"What?"

"That kids ain't got no hair on when they're born?"

"Whoever says that's a liar an' I'll bust his mug!" Porky flared angrily. "Mine's got a bunch o' hair! An' what's more—it coils!"

Regan seemed relieved but not yet satisfied.

"An' their eyes—now, ain't they closed fer a week or two like kittens?" he inquired anxiously.

"Week or two nothin'!" burst forth the outraged father indignantly. "Why, he laid

## A QUESTION OF BABIES 155

there a-winkin' an' a-blinkin' at me like we'd knowed each other all our lives!"

All his doubts and fears apparently dispelled, Regan was silent for some time. Porky was lost in happy reflections. The Boss half-sat on the arm of the lounge and stared into vacancy. He was struggling with the eternal mystery of our coming.

"Ain't it queer, now?" he said, at last, in a new tone. "Ain't it queer how people come into the world?"

"That's right," agreed Porky in a manner meant to indicate that he was wrapped up in the subject, though he was really more interested in the accomplished fact than the unknowable plan that made it possible. And, indeed, in his answer was summed up the conclusions of many grave and wisdom-steeped thinkers.

Again there was a silence.

"I don't s'pose," said Regan, wistfully, "I don't s'pose a man really knows what life means 'nless he's got a son!"

"Sure thing!" agreed Porky positively, while Regan winced with the pain that only the hopelessly childless may know. "Say, Mike!" he went on enthusiastically. "We're

just waitin' till yer first one comes t' make a bonfire o' th' whole blame ward! We'll—"

Regan sprang up from the sofa in a bound.

"Ah! Quit it!" he snarled.

## CHAPTER XV

### A QUESTION OF DUTY

THE far-off music had ceased and as Porky fell back, alarmed at his chief's sudden burst of temper, Mrs. Regan stepped out upon the platform by the dining-room door. She stopped, apparently surprised at seeing the two men.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said, with distant carelessness. "I thought you were in your office. Is that you, Mr. McCoy? How do you do?"

"Fine, Ma'am, I thank ye!" replied Porky with a nervous bow, staring with parted lips at the vision in the doorway. "The same to you, Ma'am. It's gettin' colder this evenin', ain't it?"

"Is it?" smiled Emily. She turned to the door with: "Well, I won't disturb you."

"No, don't go!" pleaded Regan, advancing eagerly. "I got somethin' I want to give ye." And then in an undertone out of the corner of his mouth he hissed: "Beat it, Porky!"

"Wot's bitin' ye?" demanded that aggrieved gentleman in the same tone.

"Fade away!" again commanded Regan, without taking his eyes off his wife. "Ain't ye got th' manners t' see when ye ain't wanted?"

Porky started and achieved a sudden, nervous bow in the direction of Mrs. Regan.

"Pardon me," he stammered. "Good-evenin', Ma'am. Hope ye sleep well, Ma'am.—See ye later, Mike!" And he went out, fairly reeling with embarrassment.

"Good-night, Mr. McCoy," Emily called, as the door closed behind him.

Regan waited until the sound of the footsteps had died away in the hall and then he turned to his wife with a smile.

"He means well, Porky does," he said confidentially. "But, ye see, the poor feller ain't had no social advantages. But ye'd like Porky if ye knew him better! Aw, he's a mut in a parlor but he's an ace at a bar!" There was a slight pause and his gaze took in the lovely figure of his wife with shy admiration. "Say, ye'r' lookin' swell t'-night," he said softly. "I kep' pipin' ye at dinner and sayin' t' meself,

## A QUESTION OF DUTY 159

'Gee!' says I, 'she's got all them other dames lashed t' th' mast!' "

A look of weariness that was more than physical crept over the girl's face. "I think I'll go upstairs, Michael," she said in a tired voice. "I'm rather worn out."

"No, wait!" he exclaimed, hurriedly, as she turned away. "D'ye know wot day this is?"

With a little sigh of resignation, Emily came down the steps and leaned against the railing.

"Day?" she questioned.

"Yeah!" he nodded, impressively. "It's April twenty-ninth!"

"Well?"

Regan winced slightly. "Well, think back six months—" he began hopefully.

The girl turned quickly away.

"Yes, I'd forgotten!" she said in a low voice.

"I hadn't!" he declared proudly, tugging the larger of the two boxes out of his pocket.

"So I took the liberty of—"

But she did not hear him.

"Six months!" she murmured, with a little catch in her voice. "Why, it seems six years!"

Regan shook his head vigorously.

"It don't t' me!—Say, Em'ly!" he went on timidly, drawing closer to her and holding out

the box. With a little shiver as if to shake off her gloomy thoughts she turned to him again. Her eyes fell on the box.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed quickly, drawing back.

"Aw, g'wan! Take it!" he urged, with rough tenderness, forcing the box into her hand. "It's just a little keepsake—just somethin' t' show I'm still on th' job, 'strivin' t' please,' as they say in th' ads."

But she interrupted him and held out the box with an imperious gesture.

"Take it back, Michael," she commanded. "Wot?"

"Credit it wherever you got it—and send the money to Father Kelly for his Strikers' Home Fund."

"Strikers!" echoed Regan, pale with the pain of disappointment.

"The women and children—you understand!"

He moved yet a little nearer. "But ye ain't even looked at it!" he said, pleadingly. "Say, it's a di'mon' frog with—"

"Oh, take it!" she interrupted, impatiently. There was a little pause. Regan gazed for-

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lornly at the little box in the slim hand and then, reaching out mechanically, took charge of it once more.

"I'm sorry," he said, slowly. "I didn't know ye minded when I gave ye things. Gee! If I'd only known—!" he stopped abruptly with a visible effort and turned slowly away in the direction of his office-door. The girl watched him for a moment in silence.

"That's all right," she said, gently. "Good-night!" He turned with his hand on the knob.

"Good-night!" he said, quietly. "I won't bother ye—no more!"

With another little shiver and sigh, Emily started for her own apartments and had almost reached them when the butler overtook her with the message that a gentleman wished to see her.

"I'm not at home, Gates," she said, and was about to pass on when he stopped her.

"It's Mr. Griswold, madam," he said deferentially.

"Who?"

"Mr. Donald Griswold. And he said I was to tell you it was most important."

Emily reached out to the wall for support.



"Why—why," she said, faintly, "then—I think you'd better—show him in—to the library."

Young Griswold looked a little pale and worn and there were dark shadows under his eyes that told of the strain from the long struggle. But his steady gray eyes and the set of his shoulders told that he was still the confident fighter. Gates had hardly disappeared before Emily threw herself upon him with a smothered cry.

"Don—! My dear—!" she half-sobbed, clinging to him hungrily. "Oh, oh, my dear, I'm so glad—so glad you've come!"

It cannot be said that he seemed to share his sister's emotion. On the contrary, his manner was decidedly constrained. He gently disengaged her arms from around his neck before he spoke.

"Are you?" he said rather stiffly. "I thought—it might be the other way round, after all that's happened."

"Don't be foolish, dear!" she exclaimed, half-laughing and half-crying. She was trembling with happiness. "Oh, I haven't seen you for so long! Oh, it's five months now! Oh, Don!" and she dragged him over to the sofa. "Come along! Sit down here

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and tell me about everything!—How's dad?" she asked, eagerly, when she had planted him on the sofa and cuddled up as closely as she could.

But Donald did not thaw.

"Very well," he said calmly. "His rheumatism came back in January, but nothing serious."

"Did he have old Cortlandt?"

"Yes."

"I wish he'd change!" she exclaimed with an anxious little frown. "They say this new man, Winter, is awfully good."

Donald indulged her with a strained little laugh.

"Imagine father changing doctors—after all these years!"

They were silent for a short time. Then she suddenly looked up at him.

"Don!"

"Well?"

"How's the business?"

He stiffened visibly.

"All right—though don't you think it's rather rough on Dad and me to ask?"

She turned hastily away from the subject.

"Don, why wouldn't either of you answer my letters?" she asked, reproachfully.

He looked down at the floor and answered gravely:

"We both took your marriage rather hard, you know."

"And I've been so proud," she went on. "I just wouldn't give in and try to make up, even though I wanted to—so often! But, now—oh, my dear!" her voice trembled. "I never realized before how much I love you!"

Donald stirred uncomfortably. "I'm chairman of the strikers' meeting to-night," he said, "and I've got to be at St. Mary's Hall by nine-thirty. So, you see, I haven't got much time. I—Emily, where is Regan?" he asked abruptly.

"Oh, I don't know—in there, I think," and she nodded toward the office-door. "Don, you're looking thin—and awfully tired," she went on, studying his face tenderly. "Can't you get off for a week and—?"

"Excuse me," he interrupted, "but I'm in an awful rush, and what I want to know is—"

"Why," she broke in with a little cry of delight, "that's the very last tie I knitted for you! How well it's worn!" Her fingers were adjusting and patting it.

But he drew away from her impatiently.

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"Do listen, Emily!" he exclaimed sharply. "I—I want to know what side you take in this anti-Regan movement?"

"What side?" she echoed.

"Yes. How do you feel about the strike, for instance?"

"Strike?" she looked up at him with puzzled eyes.

"Yes, strike!" he repeated irritably. "The union strike we're running against him. Where do you stand?"

Emily was too much hurt by the repeated repulses to focus her ideas on any new subject. Her glance wandered pathetically about the room.

"I don't know," she said vaguely.

"You don't know?" he cried incredulously. Emily shook her head.

"I've never meddled in his business," she said in a tremulous little voice. "I've done all I could to help the wives and children of the men he employs. I've been cowardly about facing things, I know. But to-night—the Archbishop wrote me a note—he wouldn't dine here. He told me—such dreadful things! They killed a saloon-keeper this afternoon."

"I know—Dave Hurley," he nodded, with a scowl.

She rose suddenly and pressed her hands to her face.

"Oh, Don!" she cried, her voice breaking. "I've been having a terrible time! It just seems—sometimes as if—I—I couldn't keep up a minute longer! Be good to me, dear! Please! I need it! I need someone to be good to me!" Her voice died in a choke and she shook with sobs.

The brother melted for a moment. His arms were around her and he pressed her to him.

"Poor little girl!" he murmured, gently patting her shoulder. "There, now—don't cry! I'm right here! Your old big brother's right here and he'll take care of you exactly the way he used to!"

Emily nestled into his arms and strove to control her weeping.

"I—I can't help it!" she gasped, brokenly. "It's just—just too splendid—to have you—back again!"

He placed her tenderly on the sofa and drew a footstool up beside her. As the sobs died away into long, tremulous breaths he said:

"Is it, dear? Then you'll try to help me, won't you?"

"Help you?" queried Emily, drying her eyes and looking up.

"Yes. It's like this. We—"

"Don," she interrupted, "give me your hand!"

As her slender fingers closed around his he went on.

"They're getting Regan's men to strike and join the union at the rate of a hundred a day. Unless something happens we'll make him shut down business by Monday at the latest. Why, even now the Western companies are getting scared—!"

"Does he know this?" the girl broke in.

"No, but he will. They see he can't stand up much longer—and he won't! He can't!—no matter how many dirty tricks he's carrying up his sleeve!"

"Dirty tricks?" repeated Emily, looking at him intently and dropping his hand. "What do you mean?"

"Why, Gleason—our attorney—" he went on briskly, "thinks that Regan's just lying low until he can get a couple of thousand niggers up from Georgia or Alabama and

start 'em working on the docks at a quarter of a white man's wages. He could do it, too—damn him! He's the only man I know who could!"

"Sh-h! Don! Be careful!" warned his sister, with an uneasy glance at the office-door. "He'll hear you!"

He lowered his voice a little and went on in a confidential tone. "But before I go to the railroads to head him off I've got to be dead sure of the whole proposition. And that's why I've come to you!"

"To me?" She looked at him in blank surprise.

"Yes! What about it?" He bent toward her eagerly. "Is that his little game?"

The girl gazed at him for several seconds in silence, a strange look in her eyes.

"I don't know," she said slowly. "I've told you I didn't interfere in his business."

"Well, I want you to do a little interfering now—for me!" he retorted, brusquely. "I want you to find out whether this is true, and I want you to find out what road he's going to bring 'em over. Then we'll wait and nab him in the act! I'm glad he's in. You can get it out of him to-night."

She raised her hand in quick protest.

"Don dear, I—"

"I'll ring you to-morrow about eleven," he went on, rising and glancing at his watch, "and—"

"Don, I couldn't do that!" she broke in determinedly.

"Why, of course, you could!" he exclaimed impatiently. "Just tell him you're interested—get him to talking—you know how! And he'll take care of the rest."

"I mean," said his sister, sitting up firmly, "I wouldn't do it!"

For an instant her brother was dumb with amazement.

"What!" he exclaimed, in a voice that startled her.

She dropped her eyes from his angry ones.

"After all, you know, Don," she said uncomfortably, "he's my husband."

"But you're on our side—you're one of us. I'm your brother when it comes to that!" he retorted.

"I—I couldn't, dear—that's all," she stammered, pathetically.

"You must!" he insisted angrily. "It's



your only chance to show Dad and me you're sorry for what you did—that you're fond of us still!"

Emily rose. She was breathing rapidly and the color came and went in her cheeks.

"I won't!" she said, steadily. "I tell you, I can't!"

He took a step toward her and leaned forward.

"You'd better look out, Emily!" he warned, with suppressed rage. "You'll make me think you approve of everything he's doing—killing saloon-keepers and all the rest of it."

"I don't approve of it!" she cried, facing him in a blaze of indignation. "You know I don't! You know I hate it from the bottom of my soul!"

"Then why don't you help us stop it?" he retorted instantly. "You can! You hold the chance right here in your two hands! Good Lord! don't you realize the importance—?"

"Yes, of course, I realize," she interrupted, coldly. "But I just know it's impossible."

"It isn't!" he insisted, almost beside himself.

"And I say it is!" she cried with rising tem-

per. "And, what's more, you have no right to come and ask me!"

"Oh, very well, then!" he exclaimed bitterly, barely able to control his fury. "One thing's sure—I'll never come again!"

"If that's the sort of reason that brings you here, I hope you never do!" she returned instantly.

"Emily!"

But she was hurt, outraged, shocked—and thoroughly aroused.

"What do you mean by stirring up all this trouble, anyway?" she demanded, walking up to him. "Didn't my husband help you just as generously as any man could?" Her brother did not wince. He merely folded his arms and looked at her doggedly. "Didn't he pull you up and set you on your feet and give you half his business, exactly as he said he would. He's kept his word—Michael has! He promised to leave you alone and he's done it, too! And that, I believe, is more than you can say!"

"I never gave my word!" he broke in, with fury.

"You're my brother, so I didn't see the need of asking it," she retorted. "But, now, Don,"

her voice quavered, "you've made me feel ashamed of you, ashamed of my family—for the first time!"

"Do you mean that?" he demanded, between his set teeth.

"Yes, I do!" and she threw up her head with a defiant look.

"You're sure?"

"Quite sure!"

"Good-night, then!" And without waiting for another word he turned and walked swiftly toward the dining-room door. He had barely reached the top of the steps when the door of the office flew open and Regan bounded out, his face flaming with passion.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ANSWER OF THE BOSS

**I**N three quick strides he was across the room.

"Get out o' my house, ye damn, sneakin' son-of-a-gun!" he roared, "before I—"

"Stop that!" cried Emily, in a voice that brought her husband up as if against a wall. At the sound of his voice young Griswold had wheeled like a flash and leaped down the steps to face him.

"Wot?" snarled the Boss, throwing his wife a furious look.

She advanced fearlessly.

"He's my brother and he can come when he pleases and go when he pleases, so long as I let him."

Regan turned partly away from Griswold and glared into the girl's determined eyes.

"See here, Em'ly!" he said, with grim sternness. "I've never stuck my back up before t' night, but you're gettin' just a little bit too

fay! D'ye know who ye are before yer any-one else? Ye'r Mrs. Regan—got it? Mrs. R.!" His voice rose with his wrath. "An' if ye think ye'r' goin' t' sit on my parlor sofa in th' middle o' my house—if ye think ye'r' goin' t' sit there an' tell th' man I'm scrappin' t' a wish how t' land me on th' jaw—I"

"I didn't say a word!" interrupted Emily, her eyes flashing. "Ask him if I did!—Don!"

"Then I did ring the bell!" cut in Regan with bitter scorn. "That was th' reason why ye come in here t'-night. Gee! Ye'r' a good boy! Ye'r' gettin' on great, ye are! First ye let me help ye when ye'r' down and out and then, by the way of thankin' me, ye sneak around an' get my men t' strike! An' now I find ye tryin' to make me own wife welch on me! This may be honesty, all right—but if it is, gimme th' other thing!"

Griswold eyed the speaker with apparent unconcern.

"Don't worry, Regan," he said coolly; "you've got it already."

The Boss's rage swept back over him and his fists opened and closed convulsively.

"Now, beat it, ye rubber-soled porch-climber, ye! Beat it!" he snarled, his jaw set

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hard. "An' if I ever catch ye in my house again, ye'll never get out alive!"

The young man's calm gaze met the Boss's furious look unwaveringly for a few seconds. Then with a shrug of the shoulders and a little smile of contempt, he turned to the stairs. At the top he paused a moment.

"Keep your eye on St. Mary's Hall to-night, Regan," he said, in even, pleasant tones, "if you want to know how things are going. There'll be a few live wires you don't expect." And he passed swiftly out of the door.

Regan might have followed him to continue the verbal battle, but at that moment the telephone-bell rang. He stamped over to the table and unhooked the receiver with a vicious snap. He hardly heard his wife call her brother and his harsh, "No, I'm through with you," from the other room. He was thinking about other things. Emily stood with her back to him. Her head was bowed and her shoulders shook. He did not notice. But she could not help hearing him.

"Hello! That you, Porky?" he was saying. "Yeah? Ye'r' at the hall, all right? Have they got a full house?—Speak up!—there's such a damn lot o' noise! Hell!

What about th' street outside? Jammed for blocks! Men, women an'—" He smothered a frightful oath. "Naw! go on—I didn't say nothin'. Has the Mayor come yet? I can't hear. They got a band playin', ain't they? Waitin' fer young Griswold, eh? Yeah—he's comin' in his auto. Wish 'twas his hearse. Wot? Good-bye!"

Regan hung up the receiver and looked up to glare at Gates, bowing from the doorway.

"Mr. Regan, there—"

"Well, wot d' ye want? Come on! I won't have no foolin' t'-night!"

"A man from the labor union. He said you—"

"Bring him in!" interrupted the Boss curtly. And as the butler turned away in stately manner he burst out with a roar: "Get a move on ye, ye knock-kneed Britisher, or I'll take that crease out o' th' back o' yer head with th' end o' my boot!"

The worm did not turn exactly, but it made a feeble wobble. Gates faced his master with a shocked face.

"Sir, I—"

"Beat it, ye fat-headed second-girl! Beat it now an' bring him in!" And the wobble ended.

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Emily walked up to her husband. Her lips quivered and she was trembling visibly.

"You must not talk to the servants that way while I am in the room!" she cried. "I can't stand it—I just can't!"

Regan's eyes fell before her hurt, angry gaze and he shuffled his feet uncomfortably.

"Aw, say! I didn't mean all that," he said, shamefacedly. "I'm sorry!"

Emily retired into the shadowy corner by the fireplace as the footsteps of the strikers' envoy approached the door. He was a tall, well-built man with a sandy moustache. He slouched into the room with a defiant swagger, as if he fully realized the importance of his position but had not entirely forgotten his fear of the Boss. On the platform he stopped. Regan's eye ran over him quickly and noted with some satisfaction that Scanlan was wearing what was evidently his "Sunday suit," the same being much the worse for wear.

"Ye from the union?" he demanded.

"Yeah," returned the delegate, with just a shade of insolence in his manner and voice.

"Wot's yer name?"

"Scanlan."

"Sixth Division?"

"Yeah."



"I'm on," nodded Regan. "I fired ye one day when ye got too flip. Remember that?"

The delegate was hurrying across to Regan's desk when Emily's pleasant voice stopped him.

"How d' you do, Mr. Scanlan?"

He turned toward her, startled, and made an awkward bow.

"Why, ma'am, I—I—" He stopped, embarrassed.

"I hope Mrs. Scanlan's feeling better than she was when I saw her yesterday," went on Emily, cordially, advancing to shake hands.

"Thank ye, Ma'am," said the man, gratefully. "The Doc, he says she's just about the same."

"Well, we ought to be thankful that she's no worse," said Emily brightly. Then, turning to Regan: "Excuse me, Michael. Mrs. Scanlan's an old friend of mine and she has bronchitis." And with a smile and a nod to Scanlan she returned to her seat in the chimney corner. During this brief dialogue Regan had been squirming uncomfortably in his chair.

"Oh, is that so?" he growled.

As soon as she had retired he bent a scowl on the delegate of the union.

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"Well, come on! Wot d'ye want?" he demanded harshly. "Choke it up! I ain't got much time."

A half-dozen feet from the Boss's desk the delegate stopped. He drew himself up and in important tones began what was evidently a carefully prepared speech.

"At the meetin' of the board last night we passed a resolution—"

"Aw, damn yer resolution!" snarled Regan. "Wot's th' least ye'll take?"

Scanlan's oratorical manner disappeared. "Ten-hour day—two shifts—an' a general superintendent elected by th' union," he replied promptly. Regan's glance ran over him like a point of steel.

"Anythin' more?" he asked, grimly.

"Yeah. Our own saloons an' no one fired fer usin' 'em instead o' yer's."

"Go on!" said the Boss, between his teeth.

"Twenty-five per cent. raise on wages—an'—" he hesitated and drew a long breath—"I guess that's all."

"All!" repeated Regan with a surprise that was the flower of sarcasm. "Say, don't ye want my watch an' chain?"

"We don't want nothin', Mr. Regan, that

ain't ours by rights," returned the envoy doggedly.

Regan was silent a moment. Then he looked up suddenly and spoke with deadly calmness.

"Who framed that resolution?"

Scanlan's glance wavered.

"Wot's the diff—s'long's it carried?" he asked.

"Was it Griswold?"

"I ain't a-sayin'," returned the other, defiantly.

"Griswold!" murmured Regan, softly. "I—thought so!"

He was silent until Scanlan moved a little nearer and demanded:

"Well, wot's the answer?"

Regan rose.

"Oh, ye want my answer, do ye?" he said slowly.

"Yeah! An' if it ain't the kind we like we'll soak ye all th' harder later on!" declared Scanlan, with triumphant insolence.

"Oh, ye'll soak me all the harder later on!" repeated the Boss ominously, as he moved slowly around the desk. The delegate eyed him with growing boldness.

"Aw, gee! Ye make me sick!" he sneered. "Come off o' that bum perch, Regan! We done ye and ye know we done ye an' there ain't a word more t' be said!"

"Ain't there?" And with a spring Regan was upon him. His left arm shot out like the drive of a ram and crashed against the unsuspecting man's jaw. Scanlan dropped with the grunt of a steer in the abattoir. He twitched convulsively for a second or two and lay still.

"Michael!" screamed Emily, rushing upon him as he drew back his foot "t' put th' boots t' him."

"Wot's that?" he demanded thickly, like a drunken man, as she clung to him. His face was flushed a dark red and for a moment or two he did not seem to recognize her.

"Michael, it's I!" she cried wildly, as he drew back his arm. She looked into his eyes until she saw recognition. The color left his face and he shivered a little.

"Get some whiskey!" she commanded.

Without a word he obeyed. When he returned with a small glass full of the spirit she was kneeling beside the unconscious man, loosening his collar.

"Is he out?" he asked in a low voice, without daring to look at Scanlan's face.

Emily raised the heavy head and forced a little whiskey between his lips. "He's stunned—that's all." She looked up at her husband, her eyes glittering with anger and grief. "It's a fine thing," she cried bitterly, "to send a man back like this to his dying wife!"

Regan turned as pale as the man on the floor.

"Dyin'!" he echoed, in a half-whisper. "But I thought ye said—"

"It isn't bronchitis!" she broke in. Her voice was most savage. "It's pneumonia and it was brought on by cold and hunger! The doctor says she won't last out the week. She made him promise not to tell her husband till the very end!"

"Why?"

Emily raised her eyes to her husband's.

"Because," she said, slowly and steadily, "she didn't want to stand between him and his striker's work."

Regan choked down an oath and sank to the sofa, muttering incoherently. His face was buried in his hands.

"That's what you're fighting, Michael, and

you'll never beat that spirit in a thousand years!"

Even in this, what we are pleased to call commercial age, there are thousands of men and women who will face death by cold and hunger and fire and sword for a principle, an idea—for a few square yards of silk with simple markings that their fathers bought with their blood. Men of the Regan type do not believe this. Or, when they do not receive such statements with cynical disbelief, they openly do not understand. Such persons are "suckers." So, when the lesson at last comes home, it strikes with double force. In that moment Regan felt the coming of defeat as he had never felt it before.

He lifted a face grown haggard in a few seconds.

"Has she—got any kids?" he asked, in an uncertain voice.

The girl was laving Scanlan's forehead with whiskey and did not raise her head.

"Four—the youngest boy was born last summer."

Regan rose, hurriedly pulled out his wallet, seized what bills it contained, and stooping over Scanlan's still form, shoved them into his trouser-pocket.

Emily's lip curled.

"What are you doing now?" she demanded.

"Just a couple o' bills," he explained, hurriedly. "He'll find 'em in th' mornin'."

The girl's eyes blazed with scorn. "You nearly kill him," she cried bitterly, "and when he's lying here stunned and helpless you think you can make it up by putting money in his pocket! Oh, what's the use!"

Regan stiffened in amazement.

"Use! Why, ain't ye got no feelin's?" he demanded indignantly. "Don't ye realize this man's got a sick wife and four kids—one of 'em a baby born last summer? Don't ye know he ain't had no wages since this strike was on? His wife needs med'cine t' pull her through an' them growin' kids ought to stoke up three times a day on meat an' pertaties! Say! Wot's th' matter with ye, anyway? Why—!"

In the silence of the big house the tinkle of the doorbell reached them. He broke off and hurried to a window. Scanlan stirred and groaned.

"Lemme get out o' here!" he murmured thickly. Regan dropped the curtain and hurried back.

"It's His Grace!" he exclaimed, uneasily. Emily looked up in alarm.

"The Archbishop?"

"Yeah!" he nodded. "He's comin' here t' see me. We got t' get this guy out o' th' way!"

Emily's ministrations were having their effect.

"Wait a moment," she said, studying Scanlan's face anxiously, "I think he's coming to. Mr. Scanlan!" The man moved and tried to sit up. He opened his eyes and saw Regan. Instantly his arms went up to guard his head. But Emily's arm was around him.

"It's all right—all right!" she said, reassuringly. "Nobody's going to hurt you. Help him up, Michael!"

Regan put his arms around the half-reclining man and one heave of his powerful back brought the fellow up on his feet.

"Where'll I stick him?" he asked, hurriedly.

"In your office, I suppose. I hear Gates coming! Can you manage him alone?"

"Sure!" And Regan dragged the still limp form toward the office-door.

"Put him in the big chair!" Emily whispered.

Regan nodded.

"An' the Bish'?"



"I'll talk to him." She closed the door behind them just as Gates stepped out upon the little platform. He seemed to be carrying even more dignity than usual as he announced:

"His Grace, the Archbishop!"

"Your Grace!" exclaimed Emily, cordially, advancing with outstretched hand as the prelate appeared in the doorway.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ARCHBISHOP

**W**HEN His Grace, the Archbishop, went to the Regan house that night he was a sorely perplexed and troubled man. His feeling for Emily was as warm and true as a father's love could be. If he had divined what was in Regan's mind from the moment of his meeting with the girl he had never unclosed his lips to a mortal soul, but night after night he had opened his heart to God. He had never feared for the girl. He knew the purity and strength of her soul. But he had prayed that through association much would be done for Regan. They had been boys together in the "old Ward" and he had for the Boss that mild, frank, comradely affection which is the pleasant and harmless fruit of boyish association.

But he had seen him grow monstrous, an offense to decency, and he knew that no power or influence of his could postpone by an hour

the day of reckoning. Nor if he had had the power would he have desired to postpone it.

This was before Regan's marriage. Back of that ceremony there was a story that he guessed at. But he hoped for much from it. He knew that all the Regans in the world could not stain the soul of Emily Griswold or blur her clean, clear view of right and wrong. But he hoped that, through association with her, Regan would change. As the priest of a church where confession is a law he knew the influence of a wife on a husband who loved her; and he knew that Regan worshiped his wife. But there was no change in the Regan that he and the city knew. He had often planned to have a fatherly talk with Emily, but she was not of his faith and as the opportunity never presented itself he felt some natural diffidence about making it. He did not know that the ceremony at St. Patrick's had been an impious mockery, part of an unhallowed bargain, and that Emily Griswold was no more a wife than she had been before.

But when she took his hand in both of hers with a smile of unmistakable welcome he thought that here he might say something of what had been so long on his mind.

"Mrs. Regan!" he exclaimed, in his deep, rich voice. "This is indeed a great pleasure!"

"Michael'll be here directly. Won't you sit down? He's—he's just doing a little business—for a friend—he'll—" she stammered uncomfortably.

"I hope you didn't take offense at my refusing to come to your party to-night," he said gravely, mistaking the cause of her embarrassment. "But after what I heard—"

"I understand," interrupted Emily, hurriedly. "Oh, I understand perfectly!"

As she turned away he took her arm and led her gently to a seat on the sofa, while he remained standing. He looked at her compassionately for a moment, then said softly:

"Mrs. Regan, isn't there something you can do to stop him?"

Emily made a pathetic gesture of protest.

"Please, Your Grace—"

But he went on without heeding.

"He'll listen to a good woman. I remember once his old mother telling me how she kept him off the streets for a week just by asking him to wash the dishes after supper. And he did it!"

"For a week!" repeated the girl, bitterly, looking straight out before her.

"Well, she was only his mother." The priest smiled.

"And I am only his wife."

"I know," he nodded. And then as he spoke of Regan he unconsciously dropped back into the forgotten vernacular of "the Ward." "An' I thought when he came t' me that day an' said, 'Father,' says he, 'I'm goin' to be married!' I thought Our Lady had dropped a smile from Heaven right down in his heart. But now—"

"Please—please not any more!" choked the girl. "You don't know—"

"I know there's mighty little any man can do if his good woman makes her mind the other way round," he interrupted. "Ah! try it!" And he bent over her with a soft, pleading note in his voice. "Just once, my daughter! An' remember, your two souls will stand t'gether on Judgment Day!"

Emily recovered her momentary loss of control. "I feel that I have no right to interfere," she said, coldly. And before His Grace could gather himself to combat this astonishing declaration, Regan stepped in from the office.

"I've just been readin' th' most interestin' book, me dear," he began pleasantly, as he shut the door, pretending not to see the priest. Then as he turned, he broke off with a perfectly natural start and exclaimed: "Well, if there ain't His Grace! Gawd save Yer Riv'rence! I didn't see ye at all!" And as His Grace extended his hand the Boss bent over it and devoutly kissed the archepiscopal ring.

Emily rose.

"Good-night, Your Grace," she said, as she started for the door.

"Oh, don't go, Mrs. Regan!" he protested. "There's nothing we have t' say that you shouldn't hear!"

"Very well. I'll be back presently," she replied nervously, with an expression of troubled concern.

As her footsteps died away in the hall the two men gazed at each other in silence. Regan's glance was pleasantly inquiring. The priest looked almost stern. At last he spoke.

"I'm on my way to th' meetin' at St. Mary's hall," he said gravely. Regan's start this time was not feigned.

"Ye ain't a-goin' t' speak against me, father!" he exclaimed.

"That's just what I've got to do."

"But why?" protested Regan, thoroughly alarmed.

"Young Griswold was a-talkin' t' me three hours this afternoon," replied the priest, soberly, "an' I'm afraid I've kept my mouth shut too long."

Regan bit his lip savagely.

"Well, if ye open up now I see my finish!" he cried with bitter resignation.

"My son," returned the other, earnestly, "I hope to God ye do!"

"Aw, father—!"

"So I stopped off on my way down," continued the priest in gentler tones, walking slowly up to the Boss, "just for the sake of old times, Mickey." He dropped his hands affectionately on Regan's shoulders. "Just to ask ye if ye won't give in before it's all too late!"

The Boss's jaw and face set hard.

"Give in and take a lickin'?" he said between his teeth.

The Archbishop released him and partly turned away with a troubled smile.

"A lickin'! Ah, it's true ye never were much good at that from th' day yer family moved into Dugan's bar and my old man—

God rest his soul!—came from the old country to run me uncle's grocery-store down the block. Do ye remember? Do ye, eh?" He chuckled softly and dropped into a chair by the sofa. He seemed instantly to have forgotten the object of his visit. With a laugh Regan sat down within arm's reach of him. The direct attack had been repulsed.

"Say, we used to guy the life out o' ye both there! When ye first come over ev'ry time ye opened that mouth o' yers, ye'd let out a 'Begorra!' green enough to turn the Fourth o' July into St. Patrick's Day!"

Shaking with amusement, the priest took up the thread of reminiscence.

"Sure, Mickey, an' it's true ye never would let me be! Only yesterday I was thinkin' of the time ye got a corner in dead cats and sold 'em for a dime apiece—a nickel for the kittens—t' tie on the end o' strings an' slam us decent kids with when we came out o' Sunday-school!"

"Sure, I remember!" exclaimed Regan in high delight. "Gee! But I had a swell time that day—and I made a dollar and twenty cents, too!"

"Ah, ye always were the J. P. Morgan o' the



whole Fourth Ward. But remember, when ye'd go too far, I'd rise up in th' name o' righteousness and beat the pants clean off yer legs!"

• "Well, ye was older than me—an' a blamed 'sight bigger, too!" said Regan, defensively.

"An' then ye'd lay fer me with a brick in one hand an' a piece o' lead-pipe in the other—"

"Waitin' fer hours at a stretch t' put ye t' sleep—like a good, kind friend I was!" interrupted Regan, with a smile of happy recollection.

The Archbishop looked at the Boss a moment, somewhat taken aback. Then he rubbed his head reminiscently.

"Well, thank God for one thing, Mickey," he said, reflectively. "Ye never could aim straight when it came t' the plumbin'!"

Regan grinned.

"'Member that last little scrap we had, behind them packin' cases th' night before ye sailed away fer Rome? Gee! I c'n feel that knock-out uppercut ye gave me after twenty-five years!" And he rubbed his jaw tenderly.

"An' mighty little good it done ye, I'm thinkin'," smiled His Grace. "Ye know,

Mickey, ye haven't changed much since those days."

"Nor you neither, Terry—savin' Yer Grace's pardon!" he added hastily.

The Archbishop shook his head and laughed.

"Ah, Mickey, Mickey! What a priest ye'd have made!"

"An' y'u, Yer Grace—Gee! What a politician!" returned the Boss, instantly, with an earnestness that left no doubt as to the sincerity of the intended compliment.

There was a long silence. The priest gazed fixedly at the Boss until the latter stirred uneasily in his seat.

"Mickey!" he said at last, affectionately.

"Yop, father?"

"Give it up, me son. Get away from Clancy's Alley," he urged, gently.

Emily returned, but the two men did not notice her and she retired into her favorite seat by the chimney place—an interested listener.

"Why, ye've been living there all yer life!" went on the Archbishop. "An' it's time ye had a change, me son. So why don't ye start in to-night an' square yerself with the whole town by tellin' the men ye'll hand 'em over what they want?" He paused and put his hand on Re-

gan's arm. "It's for you I'm askin' it, Mickey—just for you!"

Regan did not stir.

"Well? An' if I don't?"

"Then I'll go to this meeting to-night," declared the priest solemnly, "and I'll tell these men that the Church of God is right behind them. An' I'll never let up until I've struck ye to the ground, my son, an' I can do it—ye know I can!"

There was another pause. Then Regan rose with the air of a man who has accepted the bitter inevitable.

"All right!" he said resignedly. "Ye've got me. I give in."

In an instant the Archbishop was on his feet, staring searchingly into Regan's face.

"D' ye mean it?" he demanded, his voice tremulous with joy.

"Sure!" declared Regan a little bitterly, turning away with a shrug of the shoulders. "There's nothin' else t' do."

The priest raised his eyes as if in silent thanksgiving to Him in whose hands the hearts of men are as modeler's clay. "My son, I—" he began solemnly.

But Regan hastily interrupted.

"If ye go straight home from here without showin' yerself or speakin' at the meetin' I'll send word to 'em to-morrer mornin' that I'm down an' by Sunday we'll have settled on th' terms."

The Archbishop gazed at Regan curiously, who did not meet his eye. A faint doubt crept into the priest's mind. It was not like Regan. The victory had been too easy—the surrender too sudden.

"D' ye promise?" he demanded.

This time Regan met his glance brazenly.

"Sure, I promise!" he declared. But His Grace was not yet satisfied and he continued to study the Boss's face doubtfully.

"Are ye on the level? Can I trust ye to play me on the square?" he asked, thoughtfully.

"Ye can trust me like ye'd trust yerself!" Regan assured him heartily.

The prelate's face cleared but clouded even more suspiciously as Regan continued:

"In fact, I've sort o' grown to feel the union's right an' I'm all wrong, an' feelin' that way, I'd like t' make up fer what I done t' them pore fellers in th' past!"

"How long have ye been feelin' this way,

Mickey?" His Grace inquired, with a shade of irony.

The Boss, walking uneasily about the room, did not look up.

"Aw, I dunno! Two weeks—off an' on."

"How about this afternoon?" asked His Grace, grimly.

Regan glanced up with an expression of innocent inquiry.

"This afternoon?" he repeated.

"Yes."

Regan shook his head with a blank stare.

"I dunno nothin' about this afternoon," he said.

"Ye mean—ye haven't heard?" exclaimed the priest.

"I swear I ain't heard nothin'!" declared the other. "G'wan! Wot is it?"

"About your own gang!" ejaculated the priest, incredulously. "McCoy and all the rest—breakin' into Hurley's bar an' clubbin' th' poor man until—"

Regan threw up both hands and burst forth in virtuous indignation.

"Now, ain't that just too bad!" he cried, pacing furiously about the room. "I told th' boys again an' again they'd better look out or

their foolin' would get 'em into trouble!  
But—"

"Foolin'!" echoed His Grace.

"But they're young, ye know. An' they got to work hard fer a livin', so I never feel like blamin' 'em too much when they try to get a little enjoyment out o' life—"

"Enjoyment!"

"But ev'ry now an' then they go too far— I've noticed that! They—say, father," he broke off suddenly, "they ain't killed Hurley, have they?"

"We don't know yet," replied the Archbishop, slowly, his eyes on Regan's face.  
"But, Mickey—"

"Yeah, father?"

"You're quite sure," the priest went on significantly, "no orders came from you this afternoon to do this thing?"

"I swear t' Gawd," declared Regan earnestly, raising his hand and looking the priest straight in the eye, "I never heard a word about it up to now!—There's Porky, now!" he exclaimed as the telephone-bell rang. He strode hurriedly over to the desk. "He's at th' meetin' now, tellin' me how it goes.

"Hello, Porky!" he went on into the mouth-

piece, as he settled himself at the desk. "Yeah! Say! wot d'ye mean by never tellin' me about this Hurley business?" he demanded severely. "Yer ain't had time? Well, you come up here after the meetin's over an' I'll have somethin' t' say to ye—un'erstand? The idee o' such goin's-on! Why, folks'll think I put ye up to it meself! Yeah! Don't apologize now because it don't do no good an' makes me all th' madder!—Now who's speakin' down there? Young Griswold, eh? How's she goin'? Enthusiasm risin'!" He laughed savagely. "Is that so? Well, ain't that nice! Rumor o' wot? The last speaker t' be th' Archbishop? G'wan! His Grace is standin' right here beside me now an' he says he ain't goin' near th' hall to-night!"

Without taking the receiver away from his ear, Regan looked up at the prelate in dumb appeal. While he was talking the Archbishop had moved over to the desk and stood facing him, gazing down at his face, deep in perplexed thought. As he met the Boss's glance the priest drew a deep breath.

"God help me!" he said fervently. "I believe ye, Mickey, an' I'll give ye this one last chance!"



"MY WIFE'S ALL OFF! SHE DON'T KNOW ME—THAT'S ALL."





"Yeah! Ye can bet on it!" Regan shouted into the telephone. "It's O. K.—take my word! So give 'em all my love, Porky, an' tell 'em I don't care wot th' hell they say!"

He slammed the receiver on the hook with a crash and stood up, grinning.

"In a week, then, it's settled for good," said the Archbishop, with a final searching look, as he prepared to depart. A subtle suspicion of the other still troubled him.

"Just one week," cried the Boss, his eyes gleaming with savage triumph, "an' I'll have 'em settled fer good!"

"Do you hear that?" cried a high, strained voice. Both men jumped and wheeled around, to face Mrs. Regan, advancing with hurried steps. Her eyes were flashing. Her bosom heaved and there was a spot of high color in her cheeks.

"Mrs. Regan!" exclaimed the Bishop.

"D'you know what he means?" she demanded.

"Stop that! Ye—" began Regan harshly.

"I won't stop!" cried the girl, her voice rising with anger and excitement. "I won't stop until I've told His Grace that not one single word you've said is true!"

"Ye'r' crazy!" broke in Regan, waving his arms frantically about his head and dancing from one foot to the other. "Gee! My wife's gone crazy!"

"He's lied to you!" panted the girl, facing the priest. "He's taken you in from the very beginning! Why, he hasn't the least intention of giving up one inch to those strikers!"

Regan hurried up to the rigid figure of the priest whose eyes were fastened on Emily's excited face with a strange fascination. He held out his hands and said between a whine and growl:

"Don't listen to her, father!"

But the girl went on with scarcely a pause for breath.

"He's just fighting for time—time! That's all he wants! A week? Why, in a week he'll have two thousand negroes sent from Alabama to take the place of the union men!"

Regan, startled out of his pose, turned on her with a fierce snarl.

"Who told ye that?" he demanded.

"Look at him!" she cried passionately. "Why, he has the truth written all over his face!"

"Gawd!" muttered Regan, clenching his

fists, as he turned away from the Archbishop's accusing eyes and his wife's blazing ones. In the dead silence that followed the girl's half-hysterical breathing sounded loudly. The priest's face was dark with a cold rage.

"Well?" he demanded sternly of Regan's back. "What have ye got to say?"

The Boss turned with a desperate effort to pull himself together.

"My wife's all off!" he exclaimed with frantic earnestness. He almost cowered as he sidled up to the priest appealingly. "She don't know me—that's all! I say I've had a change o' heart! I swear I feel as if ev'ry one o' them strikers was—me brother!"

Emily choked with rage and disgust. She rushed upon her husband and he fell back a pace or two before her blazing eyes.

"How dare you say that!" she burst forth, with fiery scorn. "Open that door, Your Grace, and look into the next room! The man you'll see there brought the union ultimatum to this house to-night! He'll show you how my husband treats his brothers!"

The Archbishop followed her pointing finger and marched toward the office-door.

But Regan got in front of him.

"Father! Just a second!" he pleaded desperately. "Now, listen to me—please—!"

"Out of my way!" commanded the priest, and with a thrust of his powerful arm he pushed the Boss aside and disappeared in the little room.

As the Archbishop's back vanished, Regan turned to his panting wife, his features twisted with demoniac fury.

But before he could speak the Archbishop reappeared. Without a word, without a glance to the right or the left he strode across the room toward the dining-room door. His face was flushed and stern. Once more Regan got in front, but he did not dare stop the prelate. He backed away, pleading, whining, in frantic, broken phrases.

"Say, it was an accident—he fell down himself! I never meant t' hurt him! Why, he was one o' me best friends! I wouldn't a had this happen fer— Aw, father, wait now! Where are ye goin'—?" And he stopped at the foot of the little stairs, barring the exit.

The priest halted and drew himself up—a commanding figure.

"To St. Mary's Hall!"

In the heat of wrath, his powerful voice rumbled and echoed through the house.

"To talk to the citizens of this town as priest has never talked to 'em before! And when I'm through, Michael Regan, ye'll stand naked and trembling before the whole world, Michael Regan, and not one man will let ye touch his garments as he passes ye by!"

Again he made as if to advance, but Regan did not stir out of the way. He took the priest's arm.

"Aw, wot's yer rush?" he whined, between terror and rage. He had conceived a desperate plan. "I didn't mean to get ye sore—honest to Gawd, I didn't! Aw, come, father! ye'r' not a-goin' to leave me this way—that ain't no way to treat an old friend! Say, father, I—"

"Let me by!" interrupted the priest.

"Sure I will!" exclaimed Regan hastily, but not budging an inch. "Only I want t' make ye understand how I feel about yer goin' down there an'—"

"Let me by, Michael Regan!" commanded the priest, harshly. He dropped back a step as if he had divined what was in Regan's mind.

And then in a flash, the pleading mask fell

from Regan's face. The whine disappeared from his voice.

"All right!" he cried grimly, thrusting out his hard-set jaw. "When that meetin's finished—and not one second before!"

"Michael!" screamed Emily, aghast.

"Do you think you can hold me here against my will?" cried the Archbishop, sternly.

"I don't think, I'm sure!" retorted the Boss, with reckless insolence. "An' if ye don't believe it, why, off with yer coat, Terry Sullivan, an' we'll see if all the Saints can save ye from a lickin'!" And Regan clenched his fists and his stocky figure grew tense.

For an instant the man was stronger than the priest. And for just that long, the Archbishop felt an overmastering impulse to leap upon this man who dared to threaten him, to hurl the fellow from his path. But in a moment, the wild thrill, the lust of battle, was gone. Again he was a Prince of the Church—the mouthpiece of that tremendous power whose time-proven strength this pitiful worm had impiously defied—this puffed-up petty thief who dared to raise his feeble piping against the awful voice that had struck the

mighty rulers of men to their knees in the dust and shattered the thrones of kings! He swelled with an anger and scorn that words could not express.

"Down on your knees!" he thundered, with an imperious gesture. "Fall down on your knees and pray forgiveness for those blasphemies! You rebellious child!—have you forgotten the armies of the Lord protect His servants? Have you forgotten the great Church?—standing like a mighty rock against the waves of sin! Do you think a wretched straw like you can break its power or change its end from what was written in the Angel's book a million years ago?"

Regan's bravado vanished. His form seemed to shrink like a spider's in the flame of a match. In the dim days of his babyhood he had learned in his mother's lap that the voice of the Church is the voice of God and the fear of it was sucked in with the milk that gave him life.

"Aw, g'wan! I didn't—mean nothin'—" he muttered.

"Do you think a fool like you can stand alone and shake the deep foundations of the world?" roared the priest, towering above the



Boss in his wrath. "Out of my way, you presumptuous man!"

Regan cowered back against the stair-post, crossing himself. Without deigning to glance at him again, the Archbishop strode past him, up the stairs, and was gone. A far-off door slammed with a reverberation like the echo of doom pronounced—and the great house was still.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### AT ST. MARY'S

**R**EGAN turned to his wife. His face was pale and his eyes burned with an unnatural light. Fear and grief and rage had for the moment left him less than half-sane. As he advanced she retreated, trembling with fright, until they had made an almost complete circuit of the room while he poured out his bitterness upon her.

"That's a swell turn ye just done me, ain't it?" he cried in a high voice. "Goin' back on yer own husband—tryin' t' soak me ev'ry way ye could!"

"Please, Michael!" she implored, as she shrank away from his threatening eyes.

"Say, ain't I treated ye well? Ain't I done ev'rything ye wanted? Ain't I given up half the business t' yer old man? Ain't I put ye in a swell house an' depos'ted a cool million to yer credit in th' First National?"

"Don't—Michael!" she pleaded, trying to get the table between them.

"Ain't I kep' out o' yer way's much as I could?" he went on bitterly. "A-sneakin' in at th' back door, beatin' it from a room when I heard ye comin'? I've tried to make livin' here easy fer ye—an' wot do I get? Ye wait until I'm breathin' hard an' scrappin' with both hands an' then ye up an' stick a knife into me back, ye—!"

He smothered an oath and half-sprang at her, his hands opening and closing spasmodically and his short breaths hissing between his clenched teeth. Emily, brave as she was, cowered back.

"Oh, I didn't!" she screamed.

"Wot's that?"

"I just spoke because I couldn't help it!" she cried wildly. She straightened up and faced him. "I couldn't see you do a thing like that!"

"Aw! it's too bad about you!" he snarled.

"But now is your chance to make it up! Michael, listen!" she implored, frantically. "It's your chance!"

"Chance!" He turned away from her with a short, ugly laugh. "With him on his way down there to talk against me! Chance! I ain't got no chance! All I got is a finish!"

"Don't let him do it for you! Give in of

your own accord—before anyone can make you!”

“Give in!” he repeated, with another nasty laugh.

“Yes! Call up the meeting!” she went on, feverishly. “Tell them you’ve heard their ultimatum—tell them you accept it! Then when the Archbishop comes, he’ll find out what you’ve done and—oh! he’ll be so glad!”

He walked up to her and looked into her shining eyes. The lines of his face had deepened and hardened. He spoke slowly and in a bitter, harsh voice.

“I won’t quit while th’ life’s still in me!”

“You must! Oh, Michael!” She swallowed hard. “I don’t want you to do this just to help those men, or to please the Bishop—or to make me happy! I want you to do it for yourself!”

“Naw!” He turned away.

“Don’t you see what it means? Don’t you understand? You’re the only one I’m thinking of?—It’s all for you! Everything’s for you!”

“Naw!”

“Michael, you must!”

“I said I won’t!”

"Please—Michael!" she cried, desperately, seizing his arm in both her hands.

"Give in! Accept their ultimatum!" he snarled, throwing her off roughly. "Let them scoopers know they got me licked! Say—wot d'ye think I am?"

With a quivering sob Emily pressed both hands to her face.

The telephone-bell rang violently.

Never in its history had the city seen the equal of the gathering at St. Mary's Hall that night. Every inch of the great main floor was packed and the masses of men and women were jammed into the two galleries until the railing bulged, while, for a block in either direction outside the door, the street from wall to wall was filled with a seething, heaving mass of human beings.

On 'the stage, which served as a speakers' platform, there were men from every plane of society. For the strike that Donald Griswold organized had tied the hands of the Boss, and as he staggered, every man who hated him was eager to strike the finishing blow.

The Mayor was there. He had made an eloquent speech. He saw himself rid of a dic-

tator—a master who owned him, body and soul. The chairman of the Commercial Club had a prominent seat and made a fervent speech. The Boss had levied heavy tribute on the merchants. The president of the Civic Federation was a prominent speaker. His organization stated in the preamble of its constitution that it aimed at the “advancement of the material welfare of the city and the purification of its politics”; but in years it had not dared make open war against the all-powerful ruler. Three or four labor leaders also made impassioned addresses and were received with riotous cheers.

Donald Griswold was the last speaker and when he had finished a truly masterly appeal there was a roar that made the myriad lights wink and tremble. But when he was done the meeting did not break up. An envoy had been sent to the home of the Boss with the ultimatum of the union and his return was eagerly awaited. And then the rumor went out through the hall that the Archbishop was on his way to the meeting. That settled it. They would have waited all night.

Griswold had concluded his speech and retired to a seat nearly a half-hour before when,

far up the street at the edge of the overflow crowd, there was a faint cheer. The next instant the cheer was louder and nearer. Then the street was filled with a mighty roar. Those on the platform looked at each other and smiled. They knew what it meant: the Archbishop had come.

The roar grew louder and louder. There was a little swirl and a wild yell at the doorway and then the splendid dark head and powerful shoulders of the priest showed above the press about him as he worked his way toward the stage. With tears on their cheeks the rough scoopers threw themselves upon him, kissing his hands and his robe. With prayers and sobs the half-famished women crowded in his path and held up their children for his blessing. Muttering blessings right and left, he pushed through them, but he did not smile. There was a high color about his eyes and the eyes themselves burned with a stern, steady light.

As he mounted to the platform the very walls were quivering in the uproar. He shook hands with the other speakers and the members of the committee and was led forward by Griswold who tried to say a few words of intro-

duction but they were lost before they left his lips. He smiled, shook his head and stepped back.

The Archbishop slowly raised both hands above his head and lifted his eyes on high. In an instant there was a reverent hush; then a mighty rustle and rumble, and the packed masses sank as though pressed down by some vast invisible hand and thousands of ill-protected knees struck the hard, smooth floor. Several of those on the stage sank with them. The others stood with bowed heads. As if he felt that the terrible responsibility were too heavy for him to bear alone, the priest turned to his Master for aid. Here and there the stillness was broken by the plaintive wail of a child. Then the deep, vibrant voice of the priest swelled out through the great hall.

*"Pater noster, qui es in coelis, sanctificatur tuum nomen."* No one moved until the last echo of the brief but tremendous prayer had died away. Then with a deep, "Amen!" the great throng heaved to its feet.

The Archbishop's hands slowly dropped to his sides. His head sank until his gaze rested on the floor at his feet. His lips moved as if in final, silent prayer. For a moment he was



thus. Then he threw back his head and began to speak. He talked for an hour and never was such a speech. He talked as only an Irishman can when his heart is between his lips. He talked as his earlier brothers of the Church had talked to the famished kerns of Kerry and the Southland, until they seized their rude pikes and defied the sullen might of England and threw themselves bare-breasted on the bayonets.

He spoke of their long, hard toil and of the days that had been before Regan entered the grain business. He told how the Boss had slowly ground wages down to the last penny; how he had forced the men to leave half of their pitiful earnings in his saloons. And then the misery that had followed. The drunken, calloused husband—the fireless stove—the empty bread-box—the shoeless children—the horror and misery of the strike when they could no longer stand oppression—the cold and hunger of that terrible winter—the baby dying at the chilled and barren breast of the starving mother.

There were no cheers. Sobs, the gritting of teeth, muttered curses, half-smothered oaths,

waving of clenched fists, the shrill cries of the women—these told the speaker of the black storm that followed in the wake of his words; and his voice rang like a trumpet.

“And do you know where Scanlan is now—Scanlan, your delegate? He is lying senseless in that house of evil!—struck down by this man who asked you to talk of peace until he could bring in two thousand negroes to take your places! And he tried to trick me into not coming here to-night! And then—may God forgive him!—he tried to stop a servant of the Church—by force! He stood before me with a lying smile and agreed to all your just demands—with the blood of Dave Hurley still hot on his hands, with the meat of his thievery still hot in his belly and the lies of his heart new hot on his lips!”

A wild yell of pent-up rage burst from ten thousand throats.

“There must be no truce now! There can be no peace on any terms!” The words rolled out across the rising din like the booming of mighty guns above the thunder of the fight. “Through me comes to you the word of God’s Church that has stood unshaken through the

ages! that has fathered your fathers and will father your children! that for twenty centuries has fought the battles of the Lord Christ against the hosts of sin!

"And I tell you, my children, it is a holy war!

"This man is a foe to the brotherhood that was founded two thousand years ago and sealed in the blood of the Saviour at the foot of the Cross! And in the name of the Holy Catholic Church, he must be destroyed!"

Regan picked up the telephone and jammed the receiver viciously against his ear.

"Hello! Who is it? Porky—wot? In th' name o' th' Holy Catholic Church—wot? Never t' work for me again! Wot's all that noise?" He listened a moment and then dashed the telephone to the floor with a fearful oath. He faced his wife, his face distorted, his eyes glaring wildly.

"You done th' trick!" he shrieked, frenzied with rage. "D' ye hear? You done th' trick! Now, go on!—tell me ye'r' glad! Spit it out! get it off yer chest—and laugh! Why don't ye laugh? I'm just waitin' fer that laugh! You think I'm smashed! You think I'm fin-

ished! You think I'm knocked t' hell! But I ain't! D' ye hear?—I ain't. I'll beat 'em yet!" He brought his fist down with a crash that made the desk leap.

"By Gawd, I'll beat 'em yet!"

## CHAPTER XIX

### NEW PLANS

**T**HERE was little sleep in the Regan house that night. Emily flew from her husband to her own apartments and lay down on a bed of torment. His last bitter attack had stung her. Through the long hours of the night she strove to reconcile her conscience as a woman with her conscience as a wife.

She knew what Regan was when she made the bargain with him by which she was to bear his name and be mistress of his house. He had not deceived her. And he had rigorously held to the very letter of the agreement. He had promised her a suitable home, plenty of money and privacy and he had kept his word. What right had she to demand anything more?—she who gave him practically nothing in exchange.

He was a man without business morals. Well, she had known that when she married him. What right had she to ask him to change his standards to conform with hers? She was

not truly his wife. No, but as a good woman it was her duty to save him if she could. But had she the right to betray him to his enemies? She should have pleaded with him and striven to move him but, failing, she should have retired from the fight.

She hated the making of a lie. Yet she knew when she married him that her husband had built up his fortune by such means. What right had she to expose him before the Archbishop in an hour when his whole worldly success hung in the balance of the prelate's word?

Had she not for six months realized that she had no right to interfere in his business affairs? Hadn't she told her brother so just an hour before she betrayed her husband's plan of battle to his enemies? But if she had not, all of the suffering and misery of those for whom she had worked for years would have been in vain. He would have brought in the negroes and left to starve those who had made him.

She moaned and tossed about in her bed.

Well, it was over now. If she wished it, she could not undo what she had done. He was beaten at last—this strong man who had never before met defeat and had feared no per-

son on earth—but her. Arrogant, powerful, she despised him. Broken, she pitied him.

Her own hands had wrought the ruin. With that thought came a new desire to help him. She could not be his wife but she could be everything else. She would take him into a friendly intimacy, advise and counsel him and make him a companion as she had never dreamed of doing before. She recalled all his little, thoughtful services, his chivalrous respect for her privacy, his patient, humble efforts to win a smile, a word of kindness from her in the face of the chilly, impenetrable politeness with which she had always treated him. She wished she had accepted that little gift he had offered her last night. If she had, might she not have been able to move him and save him and herself pain and misery?

She saw her conduct in a new light. In her narrow purpose to give only to the letter of their agreement she had robbed herself of many opportunities to do good to thousands. Well, there was still time to do much. She would begin that very day.

It was nine o'clock. Regan had not slept nor left the library, except for a two-minute walk about dawn. He had changed his claw-

hammer for a smoking-jacket and he still wore the derby that he had put on when he went out to get a breath of air. Davis sat at a desk that was strewn with mail, telegrams, telegraph blanks, partially chewed and unsmoked cigars, with a bottle of whiskey and a siphon rising out of the midst. Morning newspapers were scattered about.

The Boss chewed a cigar and strolled around the room with his hands in his pockets. It had been a busy night and morning. He was pale and a little worn, but his eye was calm and his expression tranquil. He knew he was beaten—the whole country knew it—but he had already formed new plans which, judging from his expression, were satisfactory. That quickness to admit defeat was why he had ruled so long—why he was a dangerous fighter.

Contrary to the shibboleth, the man who does not know when he is beaten is not the dangerous fighter. He keeps on fighting until he is killed. Doubtless it is a glorious death, but the object of fighting is to win, not to die. The dangerous man is he who retires before defeat becomes annihilation and devises plans by which he may return and conquer.

The Boss picked up a newspaper and his



glance ran over the flaring head-lines on the first page.

“ ‘Boss Regan falls at last,’ ” he muttered. “ ‘Repudiated by grain companies’—‘Long fight ends in complete defeat’—Gimme the *Tribune!* ” And he tossed the first paper aside.

Davis handed him the sheet to which he looked for some shade of support.

“ ‘Mass-meeting at St. Mary’s,’ ” he read aloud, in the same undertone. “ ‘Interference o’ Archbishop’— Geel! ” He looked up with a doubtful grin. “ ‘They got me in th’ oven, too! How’s the *Courier?* ’ ”

“Antagonistic, I’m afraid,” replied the secretary, rummaging in the pile of papers.

“G’wan! Let’s have it— ‘Regan’s finish’ —‘City free at last—’ ” He broke off and glanced up as Gates came in from the dining-room with a steaming breakfast-tray in his hands. Regan shook his head in disgusted rebuke.

“Say! You get out o’ here,” he commanded, but without his usual force in addressing the butler. “I won’t have no dumb-waiters in here this mornin’.”

The butler paused half-way across the room.

"Mrs. Regan told me to bring you some coffee, sir," he said, with dignity. "She heard you'd been down here all night and had no breakfast."

Regan gasped, blinked at the servant and then at the tray.

"Well, what do ye think o' that?" he exclaimed, as if to himself.

"I beg your pardon, sir. I—" began the servant, looking around doubtfully.

"Well, wot's bitin' ye?" interrupted Regan irritably. "Can't ye stick it down? Yeah! Here on th' table! D' ye think I'm going to feed standin' up—like a mule?—Got any eggs?" he demanded, as his eyes ran over the coffee and toast which Gates deposited on the desk.

"No, sir."

"Well, move along and lay a couple—quick!" he added sharply, as Gates gave him a bewildered stare. "Two fried eggs—grasp it?"

"Very well, sir." And the servant hastily retreated.

"Read that *Leader* editorial," continued the Boss, kicking the paper toward his secretary.

"Yes, sir." Davis picked up the paper and

turned to the editorial page as his chief resumed the tramp about the room.

" 'We take off our hats to the men who have raised the present issue against Mr. Regan's methods. We—' Ah!—er—" He came to an embarrassed stop.

The Boss looked up impatiently.

"Well? Got a cramp?"

Davis hastily resumed his reading. "'We congratulate our citizens upon their enthusiastic support of the strike which has been brought to a triumphant close. Thanks to Mr. Donald Griswold and his union! Shindy Mike no longer has the city in his grip. The merciless crook who—' Er—is there any use going on, Mr. Regan?"

Regan's face took on an expression of sudden interest.

"Say, that's libel, ain't it?" he observed, calmly. "I'll sue Waterman for \$50,000. File it.—The little ink-slingin' mice!—I'll show 'em!" he added, savagely. "Say, can't I sit here two minutes without yer makin' me a present o' yer mug?" he demanded, with a glare at Gates, who once more appeared, this time with a little package of telegrams which he dropped on the desk.

"More wires, sir. Sent up from the office by special messenger."

"Read 'em, Davis, quick!" ordered the Boss, curtly, as the butler backed up to a position of comparative safety near the door.

Davis ran a practised eye over the yellow sheets. "United Transport—Chicago Freight—Erie Navigation."

"That all?"

"Yes, sir."

Regan dropped into his chair at the desk, visibly disappointed. "Well, what have they got to say?" he demanded, irritably, as Davis did not look up. "All gone back on me? Speak up, can't ye?"

"Yes, sir, they've all canceled their contracts," replied the secretary, gravely. "They're all negotiating a return to the Griswolds."

"I knew they would. Take a wire."

"Yes, sir." Davis ran over the sheets of his note-book.

The Boss rose and resumed his pacing up and down the floor. "Freight, Navigation, Transport—all the same messages. See?—'Fail t' understand yer attitude!'" he dictated, "My position in this town never bet-

ter. Will have situation controlled within a week. Urge no action until you see my representative.' ”

“But, Mr. Regan—” began the secretary, timidly, and stopped.

“Well, choke it up!” snapped Regan, eyeing him impatiently. Davis went on with desperate courage.

“They can read in the papers that the strike’s broken—that we’re beaten!”

“Aw, dry up!” interrupted the Boss savagely. Then, turning away, he caught sight of his Casabianca butler. “Say, come out o’ that trance ye’r’ in and tell us wot ye’r’ waitin’ fer!”

“I beg your pardon, sir, but there are nine more gentlemen from the papers waiting to see you and—”

“Tell ’em t’ go t’ hell!”

The butler drew himself up.

“I have, sir, several times,” he replied with sober dignity.

Regan burst into a low chuckle of amusement as he surveyed his servant’s solemn visage.

“Well, see that they get there. Un’erstand?”

"Yes, sir, but—"

"Now, get a move on ye before I catch ye on the nut with—" and he reached suddenly for the neck of the whiskey bottle. Gates vanished.

The telephone rang. Regan sank into his chair and lifted the receiver.

"Hell, Porky? Where are ye? Down in th' Ward? Yeah, g'wan. Who? Young Griswold? Wot's he doin' down there? Speakin' t' my own men? Tryin' to make 'em join the union? Wot's that?" There was a splitting oath that made Davis jump. "Yeah, choke 'im off! Sure, stop him! None o' that Hurley business, now! No, take care o' him! Don't hurt him! Just hustle him out—quick! See?"

He hung up the receiver with a bang and turned furiously to Davis.

"Griswold!—down on the river front!—right in the middle o' the Ward—tryin' t' show me own men how to bust me! The damn fool! He don't know what he's doin'! As sure as my name's Regan, that guy don't know what he's doin'!" He sprang up, fuming.

The secretary looked alarmed.

"Mr. Regan, don't go on so," he pleaded

gently. "Remember!—you've been up all night!"

The Boss controlled his anger with an effort.

"An' I got a long, hard day ahead," he added. "Yer right, me son. Now, sit down an' we'll get t' work. I'll tell ye what I'm goin' t' do—"

He stopped. His jaw almost dropped and his eyes were fixed on the doorway in a stare of blank amazement. His wife, with a covered plate in her hands, was coming down the little stairway. She wore a soft, creamy morning-gown and her feathery brown hair was caught up about her delicate face in a filmy cloud. Her restless night had left her a little pale and subdued, but Regan thought she had never looked so beautiful. In the six months of their marriage it was the first time he had ever seen her in a morning-gown.

## CHAPTER XX

### MONTREAL

“GOOD-morning,” she said, with a little smile.

Davis rose and vanished noiselessly into the office.

“Aw, good-mornin’,” stammered Regan. Then he remembered that he still wore his hat and he jerked it violently off his head as she placed the plate by the coffee-pot on the desk and took off the cover.

“I’m sorry I didn’t think of the eggs, Michael,” she said, in gentle, matter-of-fact tones, “Here they are.”

“Thank ye—kindly,” he gulped. “I always think it’s a good idea t’ begin th’ day with a couple o’ fried eggs.”

She smiled and nodded slightly.

“Are they all right?”

Regan hastily examined the eggs with eager interest.

“Yeah, they look slick,” he assured her. He



stopped and glanced up at her shyly. "I mean—I mean they look real nice."

"I'm glad," she said simply, and smiled again.

Regan's gaze fell as if her beauty hurt his eyes. He looked away from her across the room.

"Say, Em'ly—" he began in a shy, uncertain voice.

"Yes?"

"Thank ye fer rememberin' all this. It was just wot I needed. An'—an' ye was awful kind t' think o' me."

Emily colored slightly with embarrassment.

"Why, that's all right, Michael!" she exclaimed, hurriedly. Then, assuming an air of authority that made him drunk with joy: "Go on—sit down, now! Everything'll get cold if you wait!"

He hesitated.

"Ye don't feel like a fried egg yourself, do ye?" he asked timidly.

"Thank you," she smiled. "I had my breakfast upstairs. But I'll pour your coffee if you like."

"I wish you would!" he said eagerly.

She sat down at the desk in the seat Davis had vacated, opposite the place where she had arranged his breakfast.

"How many lumps do you take?"

"Four—I like things awful sweet," he added with a boyish grin, as she laughed.

"That's not very grown-up, is it?"

He gazed at her lovely profile bent over the coffee for a moment in silence.

"P'raps I'm not as grown-up as ye think," he said softly. He drew a deep breath: "Gee! But this seems natural!"

"What seems natural?" she inquired, pleasantly, without raising her head.

"Aw, I dunno!" he replied slowly. "Just to have ye sittin' in the sunshine, pourin' out me coffee—that's all!"

She gave him a grave look.

"I never did it before to-day, Michael."

"I know!" he agreed, hastily. "But it seems natural—all the same."

There was a little pause. Their eyes met and this time they were hers that fell.

"Well, there you are!" she said, rising briskly to cover a slight embarrassment that she could not explain. "Now drink it right away while it's hot!"

He walked slowly around the desk and sat down.

"Gee, it smells fine!" he exclaimed, enthusiastically, as he stirred the coffee. She watched him in silence as he slowly attacked the breakfast. But that he could see them he would not have known whether he was eating eggs or endives. The joy of having her there at breakfast with him, of drinking coffee she had poured with her own hands, deadened him to all else within and without.

"Gates said you were down here all night," she remarked at last, with a shade of anxiety that thrilled him. "Couldn't you manage to take a nap?"

He dared not raise his eyes.

"Naw! I'm afraid I ain't got any time fer sleepin'."

"That's too bad!" she exclaimed sympathetically.

"Is it? Well, I guess there's nothin' to do about it." He took a long drink of the coffee and began to recover his mental balance.

"Oh, before I forget it," she said suddenly. "Everybody who accepted for dinner to-morrow night has sent in a—more-or-less polite lie. They won't come, Michael."

He was apparently interested only in the eggs.

"Well, I guess I can stand that," he commented. "Gee! I'd rather beat up three heavyweights any day than talk t' one o' yer lady friends!"

"Even Lucy Darrow and the Gilmores—I didn't think it of them, somehow," she went on half to herself. Then, remembering: "So if you want to, you can make another engagement. That's all—I just wanted to tell you." With a little sigh she moved slowly toward the door.

He burst into a short, forced laugh.

"Another engagement?—You talk like I was a English Dook at Newport! Why, d'ye know there ain't ten people in this town'd let me eat out o' their ash-cans—free o' charge?"

Apparently she did not hear, but at the platform she turned with a sudden impulse of pity.

"Michael, I want to—" She stopped and he looked up inquiringly. "I want you to know I'm sorry—that's all," she said bravely, meeting his eyes.

He indulged in the light chuckle of the man who knows that he has the winning hand in a gambling game.

"Sorry for wot?" he inquired, lightly. "Me? Well, don't you lose no sleep about it. Just lie back an' watch me. See?"

"Watch you?" she repeated with a little, puzzled frown.

"Yeah," he nodded, mopping up some of the yolk with a piece of toast. "It's goin' to be a slick show."

"What do you mean?" she asked, somewhat bewildered.

"D'ye think them slobs have got me down?" he demanded. "Ha! I'm just puttin' up a little con game now, but th' minute they let go me arms an' say, 'This trip he's done fer'—why, then's the time I'll up an' nail 'em t' th' wall!"

"I don't understand!"

"Well, sit tight and ye will;" and he nodded mysteriously. She stared at him with growing wonder.

"Isn't it all over?" she faltered. "Aren't you—beaten?"

"Beat! Me?" He chuckled with hearty amusement. "Say, d'ye know wot I'm goin' t' do?"

Her eyes still studied his face as she shook her head.

"Then I don't mind tellin' ye. Ever been to Montreal?"

"No."

"Well, I have. It's a slick place—Montreal," he said, with moderate enthusiasm. "Good climate, theaters, swell people an' all that. How'd ye like t' live there, Em'ly?"

"Live there!" she exclaimed, startled.

"Mh—mh!" he nodded, his mouth full of toast. He pushed his plate back and resumed in an easy tone: "'Cause ye'r' goin' to, young woman. If ye hang onto me, that's where ye'r' headed fer!"

Emily slipped down the stairs and hurried across to his desk.

"What do you mean?" she demanded, staring down at him.

He wiped his lips and tossed the napkin on the tray.

"I'm goin' to turn the ocean grain traffic from this town t' Montreal!" he declared, emphatically.

"What?"

"I said I'd get back at 'em good an' hard," he went on quickly, "an' that's how I'm goin' t' do it!"

"But—but—Michael—" she stammered.

"I sent the Western a wire last night offerin' 'em half present rates if they'd unload at Montreal—as soon as I build my elevators, that is," he went on without noticing her pale, startled look. He picked up a telegram. "An' here's their answer—come in an hour ago. 'Accept offer. Have notified our Eastern agents. Please expect shipments at Montreal by the fifteenth.'—I've got 'em goin' Em'ly!" he cried triumphantly. "I've got 'em goin'! I knew they'd take me up when they heard the rates I'm offerin'—there wasn't nothin' else t' do! An' I made them Montreal people a proposition they don't dare throw. I'm waitin' fer their answer now." He glanced up at the clock.

The girl was doing some rapid thinking. With a coolness that surprised herself she observed:

"Those Canadian officials are awfully down on American business. I remember once when Dad tried to start a branch at—"

"Aw, they got their price—damn 'em!" he interrupted, harshly. "Ye can bet on that! An' I guess I'm big enough to stand it, too."

Emily pressed her lips together. "You mean—"

"Sure!" he declared, brazenly. "I'd tip 'em like I would a bunch o' bell-hops!"

"I see," she said calmly, but she was white and trembling. "But— isn't that—risky?"

"Naw!" he responded carelessly. "If they get found out, they're done. If I get found out—I done right! See?"

"And you think it will pay?"

"Pay!" he exploded, springing up and kicking his chair back. "Who wants t' make it pay? I don't! All I want is t' get back at this town an' that's wot I'm a-goin' t' do!"

Gates stepped in at the hall-door, a yellow envelope in his hand.

"Another telegram, sir," he said, holding it out respectfully.

"Give it here!" The Boss seized it eagerly, tore it open with unsteady fingers and his eyes ran over the sheet of paper.

"It's O. K.!" he shouted, joyously. "D' ye hear? They take me up! The job's done—the whole job's done!"

"Is it—from Montreal?" she asked in a low voice.

"Yeah!" He thrust the crumpled sheet into her hands. "Gee! But this is swell!"



"Any answer, sir?" interposed the butler, timidly. "I told the boy to wait."

"Naw!—Yeah! Oh, give him this!" He tossed a silver dollar across the room. The servant tried to catch but missed it. "Aw, go back t' cricket! Go back t' cricket, ye bloody Britisher! Tell him t' keep the change. He's brought me the best news I ever had!"

As he turned with a sort of jig-step the girl faced him, the telegram crumpled in her clenched hand.

"Now, Michael, listen!" she commanded in a voice that visibly modified his bubbling joy.

"Yeah?"

"There's one thing I want to make perfectly clear," she went on soberly.

"Wot's that?" He leaned against the mantel and lighted a cigar.

"If you go to Montreal—you go alone."

He paced slowly half-way to his desk and back, his eyes on the floor, before he answered.

"Oh, I do, do I?" he said slowly.

"Yes," she declared determinedly, "I won't live anywhere else but here."

His teeth closed on the cigar. "Ye'll find it sort o' lonesome, I guess," he observed, coolly.

"Lonesome!"

"Yeah," he nodded. "When I quit d' ye know wot this town'll be? A line o' shanties, two saloons, an' a dead dawg in the middle o' th' street!"

She gazed into the fire with a little sigh.

"You're very foolish, Michael."

"All right—you wait and see. I tell you I'm goin' t' strip this place till it'll have t' crawl into a barrel! I won't leave it so much 's a tooth-brush an' a pair o' shoe-strings to its name!"

The girl wheeled on him with an angry color in her cheeks.

"I don't believe it!" she cried.

"All right," he repeated, unmoved. "But just th' same, ye'd better stick on my tombstone—one o' them big marble crosses with a couple o' first-class angels at th' bottom, an' underneath—all in them fancy letters—'Gawd Help Mike Regan! He turned th' wheat t' Montreal!'"

"I don't believe a word!" she cried again, her voice rising.

"All right—then don't!" he suggested coolly, as he walked over to his desk and picked up a telephone-book.

"Michael!"

"Wot?" His finger was running down the page. "People's Gas—Home—Institute—Line—Magazine—Market—"

"Michael, have you absolutely made up your mind about this?" she demanded.

"Yeah. — Printin' — Theater — People's Trust, 2,800 Main." He sat at his desk and took up the receiver.

"Then I suppose you'll be going to Montreal immediately." There was an ominous note in her voice.

"Main, 2,800," he said, into the mouthpiece. "As soon as I've cleaned up things down here," he answered her carelessly. "2,800 Main—800, I said."

"Cleaned up things?" echoed Emily.

"Yeah—Got hold my cash."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, ye don't think I'll go off an' leave any loose change floatin' round, do ye?" he demanded, indignantly.—"Fer Gawd's sake, get a move on—2800 Main!—Why, I got over ten millions invested in this place—nearly eleven million when ye come down to it! An' when I skip my dough skips with me. See?"

"No, I don't see! I don't see at all!" cried

the girl, a little wildly, as she began dimly to grasp the magnitude of what he was about to do.

"Hello, People's Trust? Yeah—connect me with Mr. Fairbanks.—Well, I know he's president, that's why I want t' talk t' him!" snapped the Boss into the telephone. "My name's Regan. Yeah—Michael R. Regan. Got it?"

There was a little pause. Regan smoked and hummed a gay little air. Emily had started to leave the room but, as if his words had some special interest for her, she returned and stood over the desk, waiting. She was breathing hard.

"Hello, is this you, Fairbanks? Oh, I'm feelin' fine! Them strikers? Well, I ain't finished with 'em yet, an' that's why I called ye up. Yeah, that's wot I mean. I want ye to call in all th' mortgages. Sure, foreclosure. I don't care where they are! They buys and pays no int'rest on 'em fer the last—Well, I didn't start that strike, did I? 'Twasn't my fault. I don't give a damn wot happens to 'em! They ain't paid me my int'rest, so I just foreclose. See? Yeah, I'm callin' in all my loans. Sure—every security I

got, all over town! Wot?—Oh, I just feel like it—that's all. You go 'head an' do just like I say! Huh? Naw, cut that! I—Say, Fairbanks, that'll do fer you, un'er-stand?"

## CHAPTER XXI

### "DIFFERENT"

“MICHAEL!”

Surprised, he turned in his chair. He knew that she had started to leave the room, but in the absorption of his talk with the banker he had not heard her return.

“Gee! I thought ye’d gone!” he exclaimed.

“Michael!” she repeated, drawing near him with a determined air. “I want to know what mortgages those are.”

“Aw, just some little ones—down around Lake Street,” he replied, rising and stretching himself.

“Lake Street!”

“Yeah. That end o’ town.”

“Lake Street!” she repeated, incredulously.

“Why, that’s the Fourth Ward!”

“Sure, o’ course—so it is,” he acknowledged, carelessly.

“You’ve bought up mortgages in the Fourth Ward?”

"Looks that way."

"And now you're going to foreclose?" Her bosom was heaving and her breath came fast.

"Yeah. Why not?" he inquired easily.

"What's going to happen to those men?" she demanded.

"Wot men?" he looked at her in mild surprise.

"The men who live down there—the men you've employed for years!"

Regan's jaw set. His eyes and voice grew hard.

"Ye mean the men that raised this strike an' beat me?" he retorted, grimly. "They're goin' t' lose their happy homes—that's wot's goin' t' happen t' them! Ye go down there next week an' ye'll find ev'ry sidewalk in th' ward piled up with bed-quilts an' bureaus an' rockin'-chairs an' gas-stoves!"

The girl made an incoherent exclamation of horrified protest, but Regan went on with grim delight in the picture he was painting.

"Yeah—an' ye'll run across yer friend, Mrs. Moriarity, sittin' on th' corner o' Lake an' Water Streets, sellin' matches in th' rain! An' Scanlan—ye remember Scanlan?—well, he'll be sweepin' streets, if he's lucky, that is. An'

th' only grub th' Baxter kids'll get'll be them little minnies ye fish fer off th' docks. An' old lady Hogan'll have t' climb out o' bed an' sling a sack over her shoulder an' start in alley-lickin'!"

"Stop it, Michael!" screamed the girl, shrilly.

"An' all the time I'll be leanin' back up there in Montreal, smokin' me cigar an' takin' it all in!" And suiting the action to the word, he tilted his chair back, crossed his feet on the desk and puffed his cigar in triumphant content.

Twice the girl tried to speak and choked. She knew that he had the power and the will to make the picture a true one.

"But—Michael!" she gasped, hysterically. "These families—have suffered—too much already! The strike nearly finished them! They have nothing left!"

"Ah, I thought I'd wake ye up!" he commented grimly. "Well, it serves 'em right."

"And they're the people that made you. They've given you everything you have—every tiny thing!"

"Wot of it?"

"Don't you see?" Her voice broke. She



caught her breath with a gasp and went on in wilder tones. "You can't turn on them this way!"

He laughed callously.

"Can't I? Ye wait an' see!"

"Jump on them from behind!—like some wild animal they've had to punish."

"Aw, dry up on that!" he interrupted harshly. His feet came off the desk and he sat up with a frown.

"Get even!" she went on without hearing. "Get back at them—just to satisfy your own miserable little idea of revenge!"

He sprang up, his face dark with passion.

"Revenge! That's it!" The words were grated out between his teeth. "Revenge! I've got 'em all like that!" He held out his right hand, the fingers crooked, like the quivering claw of a carrion bird, and slowly closed it in a powerful grip. "An' I'm goin' t' squeeze 'em till th' bones crack!"

"No, you won't! It's too hideously cruel!"

"Aw, ferget it!" And he turned away.

"I married you to keep these people from being ruined!" she cried wildly. "I gave up a great deal when I did that, Michael, and now I'm not going to see my sacrifice!"—he

turned with a start—“that’s what it was!—I won’t see my sacrifice turned into an absolutely useless thing!”

“Well, how ye goin’ t’ fix it?” he inquired, coolly.

“I don’t know!” She sank on the sofa, shaking with dry sobs. “I don’t know anything—except that I’m—your wife!—and so—you can’t do this—your wife!—you can’t get around it—I’m your wife!”

At each mention of the word Regan grunted and when she broke off, choking, he wheeled on her with flushed face and glittering eyes. All the cankered bitterness of months burst out in a burning flood.

“Ye lie!” he snarled. “Ye’r not my wife an’ ye know it! See? But you got th’ brass when it comes to roastin’! My wife!” he laughed mirthlessly. “That’s a good one—that is! I guess if ye was my wife I might be feelin’ different! I guess I’d have no right to start a big thing that my missus was so strong against—but you! Gawd fergive me! Wot have you done? Ye’ve built a wall around yerself t’ keep me out an’, gee! it filled the job. Have ye ever handed me a friendly word when I come in from th’ office?

Why, I've seen ye crack a smile at yer butler there an' talk t' him like he was human! But me!— Have ye ever done any more'n that t' me?

"No, by Gawd! Ye let me live here in th' same house with ye day after day—ye let me lie alone there in my bed, night after night, a-thinkin' o' that locked door between us an' sufferin' through the black hours like I didn't know a man could suffer, wishin' th' day would break an' find me dead!" The words died in a gasp of anguish.

Emily rose, trembling, and stared at him with frightened eyes.

"Michael!" she exclaimed, as he gulped and half-started toward her.

"Ye say ye feel sorry fer them strikers! Le' me tell ye right here there's not one o' them that ain't got more'n me! I don't care if he's cold an' his stomick's empty an' the window's busted an' the roof's leakin'!—He's got someone t' love him! So I guess he'll pull through! But me! Why, ye kept it all back from me, all wot I want most in th' world—my feelin's, my rights—why, the best things Gawd ever gave us men! Wot have ye done with 'em, I'd like to know? Wot have ye done

with 'em, ye wicked woman? An' say now, where'd ye get th' nerve t' call yerself my wife?"

His last words gave the girl the needed shock. Her figure straightened and when she spoke she was apparently cold and collected.

"Michael, you have no right to speak to me like this. You may have forgotten the agreement we made before I married you, but I have not! I've lived up to every word of it. I've done every single thing I said I would."

"Aw, cut it now!" he interrupted harshly. "I guess you've said enough!"

"No, wait—there's something else." She moistened her lips and stopped, unable to go on. In these few moments she had resolved on a last terrible sacrifice. But with it came a hopelessness that dried her throat—a despair that was too deep for self-pity. But she was resolved. She had outraged every finer instinct by marrying this man—could the violation of her body add much to the degradation? And the sacrifice would save a thousand stricken homes.

"I—I've been perfectly right," she said, in a low voice, bringing out each word with an

effort. "But I—I didn't—realize you—felt like this. I didn't dream you— But, Michael, so long as—you do, I'm willing to go on. I'm willing—to go ahead. I'm willing to make another bargain."

"Wot's that?" cried Regan sharply, wheeling in a flash.

The girl was half-turned away from him, crouched slightly, her figure tense as if to flee at the first sign of his advance.

"I'll—change!—I'll be—different!—"

"Be different!—Say, quit that," he growled, fiercely, "or some day I'll—"

She interrupted, her lips framing the words mechanically, as if forced by some external power.

"Why—don't you want me—to be different?"

He took a step toward her and stopped, struggling with a sudden sob.

"You know—oh, gee! You know—!"

"All right—then I will!" she finished with a rush. "If you'll only give up this dreadful idea of yours, if you'll stay and take your beating like a man!"

He advanced another step, but she did not stir.

"D' ye mean—?" he panted. "Say, ye don't mean—!"

"Yes—I do!"

"Naw—ye can't!" he gulped. "Beat it now—I give ye warnin'! Beat it while ye got the chanst!"

"I won't!" She shut her eyes and set her teeth.

He pressed his hands against his face until the nails bit into his temples. A shudder shook him from head to foot.

"Oh, my Gawd!" he cried in agony.

The girl's lips barely moved.

"Tell me—!"

"—Em'ly!" With a wild cry he rushed upon her and crushed her in his arms.

"I'd go t' hell fer this and lay there, Em'ly!" he shouted, hurting her with the violence of his caresses. "An' lay there a-smilin' forever an' forever! Stop shakin'—hold yer head up, sweetie!—I love ye! I love ye!"

His lips crushed her cold ones in a fierce kiss. For ten seconds she was breathless, powerless in his arms. Then she struggled desperately.

"Stop it!—Keep away!" she gasped, twisting her head away from his lips.

"Ye love me!" he shouted, triumphantly.

"Gee! Ye love me an' I never knew!"

"I don't!—I hate you!" she panted, clawing frantically at his encircling arms.

"Ye'r' givin' in 'cause ye want to—"

The rest was lost in her cry of horror.

"Stop it! Stop it! Stop it, I tell you!"

"Ye'r' doin' it of yer own free will!"

With a last despairing, convulsive effort she wrenched herself out of his arms and faced him with a mad light in her eyes.

"How dare you say that?" she screamed.

"Well, ain't it true?"

"No—no!" she screamed, violently.

"I tell you I'm selling myself for a price—a price!"

The words struck the color from his flushed face.

"Em'ly!" he gasped.

But she swept up to him and almost literally threw the words in his face.

"I'm paying you cash down—just as if it were money! I'm paying you cash down because it's the only thing you'll take!"

"Em'ly! Fer the love o' Gawd!" he cried, recoiling, aghast.

"I want you to know—I've got to make you

understand!” she went on in a frenzy. “It’s just another bargain! You’re getting me cheap! Do you hear that? Cheap! I’m going dirt cheap!”

He sprang at her and forced his strong hand down over her mouth.

“Stop it!” he cried, harshly. “I done some rotten things in my time, an’ I guess ye know it, too, but—gee!—I never done nothin’ half so rotten as wot ye’r’ doin’ now!”

He pushed her away from him with a shudder that was born of something akin to disgust. The slumbering instinct of his people awoke—the instinct of a race that through the centuries has been famous among the nations for chastity and the reverence of womanhood.

“Sellin’ yerself! Payin’ me cash down! Goin’ cheap!” he repeated, with bitter scorn, as the girl sank to the sofa with a convulsive sob. “Gawd! D’ ye think I want ye, if that’s how ye come? D’ ye think I’ll take my wife that way? I guess ye don’t know much about real men! If ye did, ye’d never tried to pull off a deal like that—ye’d never made me feel ashamed o’ ye! Yeah, ashamed!—like I’m feelin’ now!”



"Ashamed! You?" she staggered to her feet with a hysterical laugh and ran to the door. At the foot of the stairs he caught her and seized her arms in a painful grip.

"I tell ye," he cried fiercely, "my kids are goin' t' be born because I loved their mother with all my mind an' body an' soul an' because she loved me back with all o' hers! An' if such things as that can't be, why then, so help me Gawd, I'll have no kids at all!"

She broke away from him and fled with a terrified cry. He stood for a moment, swaying like a drunken man. His arms sought the stair-post for support and he leaned his weight against it. His head drooped upon his arms and he was shaken with a sob of anguish.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE LOYALTY OF THE FOURTH

A MINUTE or two passed and Regan did not stir. Suddenly there was a rush of footsteps in the hall, the door was thrown open and slammed, and someone lurched against his desk.

"Mike!"

The Boss raised his head and turned to face McCoy. One glance and he was startled out of his own bitter thoughts. Porky was white as paper. His hair was matted down with perspiration and hung in damp strings over his forehead. His chest heaved with its labored breathing.

"Gee! Porky, ye look all in!" exclaimed Regan, coming swiftly over to him. "Wot's the game?"

"It's young Griswold!" panted his lieutenant, leaning on the desk for support.

"Who? Come over here an' tell me!"

Porky walked unsteadily around the desk. His lips were trembling.

"Gimme a drink!" he panted. "I run—all the way—from Lake Street!"

"Sit down!" commanded Regan, curtly, as he turned to pour a large drink of whiskey. But Porky did not sit. Regan watched him as he tossed off the drink. "Well, g'wan."

McCoy's breathing grew more regular, but there was a terror in his eyes that filled Regan with vague dread.

"G'wan!" he repeated, impatiently.

"He came down t' th' ward t' spiel—you know," began Porky, rapidly. "He got up on a barrel, a-wearin' one o' them nobby little dips—an' he just sailed into ye, Mike, sayin' how he got ye licked, callin' ye all the dirty names he could think of—an' I sort o' went off me nut, an', seein' as I happened to have a brick in me hand, I guess I just heaved it, an'—an' it caught him in th' head—he went down!"

Regan drew a quick breath and glanced hastily about the room.

"You—!" Porky shrank back before the flame of rage and terror that leaped from his chief's eyes. But Regan checked himself and darted to the hall-door. He opened it and

glanced quickly up and down the hall. There was no one in sight.

"There was an awful mix-up an' I beat it," Porky was finishing as he returned.

"Is—he dead?" demanded the Boss in a low voice. Porky turned away, trembling. "Is he dead?" repeated Regan. Then he suddenly gripped the other by the lapels of the coat and jerked him savagely around. "G'wan an' tell me—tell me! Ye gotta tell me!"

"I dunno!" Porky kept his head turned away. "They took him into Dugan's café an' then th' ambulance came an' got him."

In a spasm of rage Regan hurled the fellow spinning across the sofa.

"Damn ye, Porky!" The oath was grated out. "Damn ye! Damn ye!"

McCoy scrambled to his feet and held out his hands in appeal.

"Say, Mike, I didn't mean to do it—honest ter God, I didn't!" he cried frantically. "All I wanted was ter knock his lid off! Wot did he want t' come down there fer? He might ha' knowed he'd get soaked in yer own ward!"

Regan's powerful fists opened and closed as he fought to control himself.

"An' I'd a-given my right arm ter have kept him safe!"

"I know yer would, but there's no use talkin' now!" Porky advanced timidly and took Regan's arm in both hands. "Mikel Wot'll I do?" his voice rose with his growing terror and he clung to his chief desperately. "Mike, I got a sick wife an' a new kid! Tell me wot I'll do!"

Regan swung round on him.

"Shut up, Porky! The whole house'll hear ye!"

McCoy cowered, trembling. Regan took him by the lapels with both hands and straightened him up.

"Now, listen!" he commanded, sharply. "Did anyone see ye fire th' brick?"

"Naw—they was all lookin' at him. I was on th' outside—an' anyway I ducked round soon's I done it."

"Ye'r' sure nobody piped ye?"

"Sure! Why, I was one o' the guys that carried him into th' café an' they never said a word!"

The Boss put his left hand on his lieutenant's back and shoved him gently to the door.

"Then it's all right," he said, almost cheer-

fully. "Go home t' th' wife an' kid—an' keep yer mouth shut! Understand?"

"Not do nothin'?"

"Not a damn thing!" declared Regan emphatically. "An' if there's any trouble I'll look after ye."

"Aw, thank ye, Mike!" murmured Porky, unsteadily, with a fervent squeeze of the Boss's hand. "I knowed ye'd fix me up."

"G'wan now—beat it!" And Regan pushed him through the door. "Remember me to the missus. An' how's th' kid to-day?"

A swift ripple of pride swept over Porky's strained, white face.

"Gettin' bigger," he answered eagerly. "An', gee! his wrinkles is all comin' off."

As Porky's footsteps died away, Regan suddenly started and threw up his head, listening. Far-off down the street there was a strange, confused murmur. Could it be possible? Even at that distance he thought that he could not be mistaken. It was like no other sound of man or beast or storm or flood or fire. No man—not the bravest in the world—ever heard it without feeling his heart dot-and-carry-one. And no man who has heard it once will ever

forget or have difficulty in recognizing it again.

It is the sound that a thousand men make when rage has robbed them of the heritage of ages—the roar that rises from the blood-lust in the heart of a mob.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE MOB

“**M**R. REGAN.”

The Boss turned to face his secretary who seemed to be somewhat shaken out of his habitual imperturbable calm.

“Well, what d’ ye want?”

“Mr. Regan—” Davis hesitated, as the noise without grew louder and nearer. “Do you hear anything?”

The Boss listened a moment as if he had not noticed the noise before.

“Yeah,” he nodded, with mild interest. “Wot is it?”

“It sounds like a crowd. I think they’re coming up Concord Avenue.”

“The hell they are!” Regan strode over to the window and peered out, with real interest this time.

“And there’s a gentleman says he must see you,” continued Davis.

“I won’t see no one,” returned the Boss, shortly, without turning his head.



As Davis shrugged his shoulders Lawrence Duncan burst hurriedly into the room. He wore a motor coat and carried a cap in his hand.

"Regan!" he called sharply, as he caught sight of the figure by the window.

Regan threw a glance of dull curiosity over his shoulder.

"Well, what d'ye want?" he demanded curtly.

"Donald Griswold went down to speak in the Fourth Ward," said Duncan, swiftly, with suppressed excitement. "He was set upon by some of your toughs. He's hurt—nobody knows how badly. He may be dead."

The sounds from down the street grew louder and more ominous.

"An' that out there?" Regan inclined his head toward the window.

"The whole town's up in arms. They're sure you did it."

"Me!" Regan wheeled sharply and stared at the young man.

"Or had it done! They're sure you gave the orders."

"Of course they are!" agreed the Boss, with a bitter shrug.

"Regan, I came to tell you that the police are on their way," went on the young man rapidly. "Mr. Griswold's sworn out a warrant—you're going to be arrested!"

If it was his object to shake the Boss out of lethargic indifference, Duncan had succeeded. Regan's figure stiffened and his teeth clicked.

"Damnation!" he growled.

"Come on—the alley's clear!" urged the other, with a half-step toward the door. "But it won't be in five minutes. I've a motor waiting on the corner of McDonald Street. We'll have you ten miles away from here by the time that patrol gets here!"

Regan suddenly flared up with angry suspicion.

"Say, who are you, anyway?" he demanded.

"My name's Duncan."

"Ye'r' one o' his friends, then?"

"Whose?"

"Griswold's."

"What of it?" demanded Duncan, impatiently. "I'm here to help you now. Don't you believe it?"

Regan turned away with a short, contemptuous laugh. The clamor in the street grew louder and louder.

"Aw, wot are ye givin' us?"

"It's true!"

"Help Regan?" repeated the Boss, with amused incredulity.

The young man walked up close to him.

"No, damn you!" he said, in a low, tense voice. "Not Regan!—Emily Griswold's husband!"

"Cut it, now!" broke in the Boss, quickly.

"She's your wife, Regan! You've got to think about her!"

"That's all right," nodded the other, in a manner that indicated the close of the conversation. "I c'n manage my wife without no buttin' in from anybody—understand?"

"You can't!" insisted Duncan, with rising excitement.

The noise had become an angry roar, close at hand. He had to raise his voice to make himself heard.

"That mob'll be here in a minute and this house won't be safe! I'm going to bring my motor to the side door. Tell her to come down this minute! I'm going to take her home!" The last words were almost lost in the din from the street as he dashed into the hall. Davis was peering anxiously out through the cur-

tains. The house stood on a corner and he could see the throng rushing up the avenue.

"Why, they don't look like strikers!" he exclaimed.

Regan moved up beside him.

"Strikers! Ye blame fool, it's the town!"

"The town!" Davis drew back instinctively.

"The whole damn town!—Gee!" Regan exclaimed, half to himself. "Here's where we're up against it!"

"Why, they're a lot of well-dressed men!" gasped Davis. "They haven't any hats! They look—why, they must be drunk!"

"Aw, g'wan! They're about as drunk as a bunch o' tigers!" The roar from the street swelled savagely. "Hear that? They're mad—mad clean through!"

The mob reached the corner and swirled around the house with demoniac howls. It was as Regan had said: from the river front to Washington Street, the town was there. Within twenty minutes after Donald Griswold fell, a frenzied horde from the docks surged up-town, demanding the blood of Regan. And as they carried the news their number swelled, hundreds to the block. Staid

merchants cursed for the first time in twenty years and dashed out bare-headed to join them. Clerks left their counters unattended. Saloons were emptied. Even the courtrooms were deserted and lawyers forgot that they were officers of the court.

But all of them—scooper, banker, merchant, lawyer, were brought to the same level by the wild-beast lust for blood.

“Look at them!” exclaimed Davis, with a gulp. “The street’s full! Why, there must be hundreds!”

“Thousands is more like it,” said his chief, coolly.

“But—but what are they doing up here, Mr. Regan? What are they after?”

The Boss smiled grimly.

“Can’t ye see? Why, they’ve come t’ make a little friendly call on me—that’s all!”

Davis stared, pale with fright.

“Oh, no, sir! Not that! It—it must be a fire!”

“Fire be damned!” exploded Regan. “If ye ever seen a mob a-coughin’ that way before, ye’d never ask again what it means!”

“You don’t—?” gasped the secretary.

Regan nodded coolly.

"Sure I do! Why, ev'ry man-jack down there's out fer blood! Somethin's happened in th' Ward an' they're comin' straight fer me!"

With yells of "Lynch him! Drag him out!" the mob crushed through the big double-gates and surged over the fence upon the lawn.

"Mr. Regan! Look! There's Scanlan on the sidewalk—the man with the brown coat! I'd know him anywhere! And there!" He jumped with amazement. "Do you see? right beside him—why, it's old Archbold Houghton of the First National!"

Regan laughed grimly.

"And the fellow climbing the fence!" cried Davis, excitedly. "Isn't that old Grayson of Grayson, Grayson and Company?"

"Yeah!" nodded the Boss, rapidly chewing his cigar. "An' that young fellow behind him—that's young Harry Huntington—the guy with the cigarette."

"There's a lot of strikers, too.—And look there! See those Italians up by the gate? Why, they're all mixed up! Gentlemen and toughs, scoopers and big business men!"

Regan grinned.

"But they all take hold hands when it comes

t' hatin' me!" he cried jovially. The mob was now close to the house and the uproar was deafening.

Davis shrank back from the window.

"Look out, sir! They're right below—they'll see you—Good Lord!" he exclaimed with a jump as a brick smashed through a window in a near-by room. Regan seized his arm and pushed him toward the door.

"Go upstairs and tell me wife t' come down here," he ordered, crisply. "Mr. Duncan's here to get her."

There was another crash of glass and a rising chorus of wilder howls from the lawn. Davis almost collided with Gates, rushing white-faced into the room.

"Mr. Regan! Mr. Regan!" gasped the butler. "There's a crowd of—very dangerous-looking—fellows outside!"

Crash! crash! went two more windows and from the lawn rose a bedlam of shrieks and howls.

"That's right!

"Fire another!"

"Gimme that brick!"

"Come out o' there, Regan!"

"Regan! Regan!"

"Come out!"

"Yeah, come along!"

"Th' damn coward!"

"Smash his winders!"

"Lynch him! Lynch him!"

Mrs. Regan's French maid rushed into the room, imploring someone to save her "*pour l'amour de dieu!*" She was closely followed by an Irish housemaid, calling wildly on the Saints for protection. With shrieks they hurled themselves upon the butler.

"Choke it off!" snapped Regan, the receiver of the telephone jammed against his ear. "I can't hear!"

Above the din from without, the crashing of glass and the screams of the servants Regan managed to make himself heard. He had Police Headquarters on the telephone.

"I'm Regan!" he shouted. "Michael R. Regan! Say, I got a mob outside smashing me winders! Can't ye hear em?" He held the receiver toward the window. "Not now? Well, ye take my word fer it and send up all ye got. I'll need everyone! That you Kelly? Yeah, send 'em along a-hoppin'—all the reserves!"

"He's in there! Soak 'im!" yelled a voice,



close under the window. There was a shattering boom, as a heavy missile crashed into the front door and furious howls of "Regan! Regan! ye coward!"

He ran to the window and threw the curtains aside. At the sight of him a howl arose that drowned the screams of the women and the splintering of windows. A brick crashed through but missed him. He sprang to the table and threw open a drawer with an oath. Another brick came through and swept the telephone and student-lamp to the floor. The maids put more energy into their screams and Gates dragged them out.

"Ye would, would ye?" Regan growled furiously. "Ye dirty dogs! A-tryin' to frighten women! Ye wait there—I'll show ye!" He slammed the drawer and ran back to the window. An automatic revolver gleamed in his hand.

"Well, here I am!" he roared, as the fierce yell of triumph died away. "I'm the man ye want! Take a good look at me! I'm right here an' I ain't goin' t' move!"

Another fierce howl swept up to him.

"We'll show you! We got ye! Kill him! Kill him!"

Regan laughed tauntingly.

"That's right—yell away! Yellin' don't hurt nobody! Keep it up! G'wan—I like to hear it! But if ye bust as much as one more pane o' glass, by Gawd, I empty this repeater without stoppin' once t' wink!"

And he thrust the weapon out at them. For an instant there was a dead silence. Then a roar of angry groans and jeers.

"Ah! 'Tain't loaded! He don't dare! It's one o' his tricks! Where's that brick?"

Regan had never studied psychology out of books. But he had had a long course at first hand which has obvious advantages over the course laid down at endowed universities. He singled out a burly ruffian who towered conspicuously above the whirl and leveled his pistol at him.

"Say there, ye big slob!" he roared, harshly. "Yes, you!—with the red bandana—you! Drop that brick or ye— Wot? All right!" He frowned as if about to press the trigger. The man dropped the brick. Regan laughed triumphantly.

"Aw! I knew I'd got yer! Where's yer nerve?" he taunted, lowering his pistol. "Ye'r' scared!—the whole damn crowd o' ye are

scared! Ye know I'm here with nothin' but me wife and a bunch o' second-girls but I've got ye goin'! Ye'r' hangin' on th' ropes—"

A savage roar cut him short and the mob heaved forward like a great wave to the foot of the steps with yells of, "We'll show ye! Stop his gaff! Smash the door! Bust in the door!"

He quickly raised the pistol. The wave hesitated at the foot of the stairs. Far down the street the gong of a police-patrol clanged violently.

"Stop right there!" he roared. "D' ye hear? The first guy that puts his feet on them steps'll get a bullet through his nut! Understand? Now, come on! Say, why don't ye come on an' get me? I'm right here—all ready! Just a-waitin' fer ye!"

The mob howled with savage rage, but no man put his foot on the steps. The muzzle of the revolver did not quiver and the face behind it was hard and stern. Like the Etruscans, "Those behind cried, 'Forward!' and those before cried, 'Back!' "

The yells of, "Lynch him! Lynch him!" drowned the sound of the police-gong to all but Regan's straining ears. It was close at

hand now and he knew the danger was over. He laughed tauntingly.

"What's that? I didn't catch! Oh, all right! Fine an' dandy! If ye want to lynch me, Mister, come right up an' start in! I'd like t' see ye try! Don't be bashful!"

The roar rose sullenly, but from the edge of the crowd came a sudden yell:

"Cheese it! The cops!"

The patrol dashed around the corner. The driver pulled up his horses and twenty men with drawn night-sticks, tumbled out.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ALONE

**M**EN in uniform rarely have any trouble with an American mob. The American has a traditional respect for authority that is not found in countries where the uniform is the badge of the master, not the livery of the servant. Consequently the sight of a blue coat at a time like this one has the effect of a sobering draught at the end of a debauch. A man feels the same sense of shame that comes to one with the realization that he has indulged himself to excess.

The mob in front of Regan's house vanished like snow before the advance of the inspector and his men. A few of the strikers were inclined to misbehave and were banged across the legs with night-sticks for their pains. Regan enjoyed the scene immensely. He shouted humorous directions to the police until the last of the mob had disappeared. Then he turned away from the window, chuckling. He was still chuckling when Emily hurried breath-

lessly into the room, in street costume, with an auto coat across her arm.

"Where's Mr. Duncan?" she asked eagerly. "Mr. Davis said he was here."

Regan glanced at her eager face and half-shut his eyes with pain and dread as he thought of what was before him.

"Is that all—Davis told ye?" he asked, uncertainly.

She lifted her eyebrows slightly.

"Yes."

"Oh, my Gawd!" he groaned, half-aloud.

"Is Mr. Duncan downstairs?" she went on, a little impatiently. "Mr. Davis said the library."

"He's out gettin' the auto through th' crowd. He's come to take ye home," he replied, soberly.

"Home!" she echoed joyously. "Is Don here, too?—I mean, my brother?"

Regan hastily turned away.

"Naw! I'm afraid—I'm afraid he ain't here."

She looked at him doubtfully and then started for the door.

"Well, I'll go downstairs and wait."

"No, stay here," he quickly interposed.

As she stopped he paused and added slowly:

"There's somethin' I gotta tell ye."

"What is it?—Well, why don't you tell me?"

He did not speak.

"Michael!" She began to look worried.

"Do you know you are making me rather—nervous?"

"Sit down," said he at last.

She sank upon the edge of the sofa.

"Go on."

He drew a deep breath and, avoiding her eyes, began in a businesslike way. "Yer brother—" He stopped.

She stirred impatiently.

"Well?"

He went on quickly, as if determined to hurry through with a terrible ordeal.

"Well, he went down t' the Fourth Ward about ten o'clock this mornin' t' talk t' all th' men who stuck by me an' hadn't joined the union."

"Yes. Go on," she urged as he hesitated.

"Porky McCoy 'phoned me he was doin' it an' I got mad an' said t' head him off. Then you come in an' we got t' talkin' an' I fergot all about it. An' you ducked out an' the mob

c'lected down there an' I felt sure somethin' had gone wrong an'—"

"Michael!" she exclaimed, the color leaving her face as a quick suspicion leaped up.

"But I didn't know a thing—so help me Gawd, if I did!—until Porky come an' told me about it."

The girl leaned toward him with frightened eyes.

"About what?"

Regan moistened his lips.

"Yer brother," he said, in a low voice.

"Tell me!—tell me, quick! What's happened to him?" Her hand was at her throat as if her dress choked her.

Regan went on desperately.

"Why, he was sayin' some rotten stuff about me an' that made th' fellers sore an' they began firin' things—Porky says it was a brick caught him on th' head. They got him to hospital's quick as they could an'—"

The rest was lost in a terrified scream as the girl collapsed into a huddled heap on the sofa, her hands pressed to her face. Regan rushed to her.

"Em'ly!" he cried, frantically. "Ye don't believe I done it? My Gawd! Ye don't be-



lieve I done a thing like that? No, ye don't—ye can't."

"Oh, Don! Don!"

He gulped and pressed a straining fist to his temple.

"Ye know I never knew a thing about it till Porky told me—ye know that!" he pleaded desperately, as the girl rocked to and fro in her anguish. "Ye know that—don't ye, Em'ly? Ye know I wouldn't ha' had it happen fer anythin' in th' world! I—Em'ly! Em'ly!" His voice broke in sobs. "Ye gotter believe me! I never would—ye gotter believe me!—I'm on the level this trip—'cause I am! I swear t' Gawd, I am!"

"Oh, Don! Don!" she moaned.

Tears streamed down his face and his voice rose high and strained.

"I got the whole town lined up against me—I'm all alone! But if ye believe, Em'ly, I don't care! An' I'll be good from now on!—I'll throw up Montreal—all! I won't foreclose any mortgages!—I'll do anythin' ye want me to if ye'll only believe me now! An' ye do!—ye'r' goin' to—I knew ver would! I knew—!"

He choked. He fell on his knees and sank



"I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT ME TO IF YOU'LL ONLY BELIEVE ME NOW."



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forward, burying his face in her lap. He shook with sobs.

"Oh, my Don! Don!" An auto horn sounded from the street and for the first time she seemed to realize that Regan was near her. She pushed him away with a gesture of unspeakable horror and sprang up.

"Don't—touch me!" she gasped.

But he held her right hand.

"Em'ly!"

"Don't come near me!" He cowered under her look of loathing, but clung to her hand and rose and followed her as she tried to pull away. Then a rage seized him. "Stop it! Keep away!" she panted.

"So you think I done it, too!" he broke out fiercely. "Tell me—tell!" He gritted his teeth. "I say yer gotter tell me!"

"I don't think—I know!" she screamed.

He flung her hand from him with a yell of fury. He was mad—mad with grief and despair.

"If ye b'lieve I done a thing like that," he roared, "all right! We'll call it all off! So go ahead. Wot are ye wâitin' fer? Clear out o' my house!—beat it!—move along!"

She was gone. With a choking cry he ran

to the door and clutched the frame to keep from falling.

"Em'ly—Em'ly!" he whimpered. "I didn't mean that! I swear t' Gawd, I didn't know anythin' about it!" A door slammed. "Don't go! Don't, Em'ly! Don't leave me, dear! I'm all, all alone! I ain't got no one else! I'm all alone!—alone!—alone!"

The whimper died in a sob and his head sank on his arms.

There was a sound of many footsteps in the hall and then at the door behind him. Regan wearily raised his head and turned. The numb calmness of despair had succeeded the outburst. He looked over the five men. Three were in uniform and two in plain clothes. He knew them and their mission. One was Inspector Kelly. He stepped forward with an embarrassed cough.

"I'm sorry, sir, but—you've got t' come along with us. There's a cab a-waitin' an'—" He paused and smiled uncomfortably.

Regan eyed him calmly for a moment. Then he walked over to a chair, picked up his hat and overcoat, and put them on. The five men watched him without a word as he poured

a drink of whiskey and drank it and stuffed the pockets of his coats with cigars from the humidor. He picked up a newspaper, glanced at the date and tucked it under his arm. Then he put a cigar into his mouth, closed his teeth on it, and turned to the police with a curt nod.

"Come on, boys!"

## CHAPTER XXV

### MORE NEW PLANS

**W**HEN an alert, active man is suddenly cut off from all activity he is likely to become introspective to a surprising degree. If it should happen that four walls of a prison room are what cut him off from all activities he is certain to give himself up to self-analysis as he never did before.

He is also certain to reflect deeply on the causes—subjective and objective—that brought him there. With weak men this degenerates into feeble brooding. With the keen and strong of mind it frequently results in a remarkable clarity of vision.

Regan was a man of no education and he did not turn to the distraction of books when he found himself housed in the Inspector's bedroom at police headquarters, awaiting the result of the injury to Donald Griswold. Consequently he thought much and at the end of the second day he had formed many strange but accurate conclusions.

The numbness that came over him when Emily left him, coupled with utter physical weariness, made him sleep ten hours the first night in prison. The next morning his first feeling was of bitterness. His wife had tried and convicted him of the attempted murder of her brother without giving him a hearing. She had told him he lied when he denied that he had ordered it, and the city and the machinery of the law believed that he lied. Yet he had given specific orders to his men to look out for Griswold's personal safety!

It was bitterly unjust. But as he reflected he saw a new light. Why should Emily have taken his word for it? Had she not been in the room the night before when he swore to lie after lie in the name of God before a servant of the Church? He was innocent of the assault on Griswold, but was he innocent of the assault on Hurley? No one could prove that he had anything to do with the wrecking of the union saloon and the attempted murder of the proprietor, but it was plainly premeditated and carried out by his own men. Had he not earned a reputation for gaining his point by violence when he could not win any other way? Was it any wonder if they refused to believe



him the one time he happened to be innocent?

And Emily? He at last understood—many things. What a fool he had been to suppose that he could ever make her love him! He had always believed that time-honored, humorous lie that all men are born free and equal and that one man is as good as another. If anything he had always considered himself a little better than the people of her world. He had started from nothing and amassed a fortune. They had always had money, yet he could buy and sell most of them two or three times.

But he understood now that to her and her people money was a little thing—that as a mere matter of money all of them would have gladly faced ruin rather than have had anything to do with him. They were a lot of “stuck-up high-brows” to him in those days. The only difference was that they spoke the English language in another fashion, but by no means any better than he did and knew more about the wars of ancient Greece.

But he could see now that she was not proud because she knew who her great-great-grandfather was or even what he was. It was the fact that he was what he was and that his de-

scendants had been what they were—clean-living, honorable, cultured men—that had molded her into something above his world. He saw her marriage in a new and awe-struck way. He understood her interest in Mrs. Moriarity for the first time. In a dim way he began to grapple with the strange idea that unselfishness and self-sacrifice are not necessarily symptoms of softening of the brain.

When this thought had finally survived the travail of birth he knew that he should never have married the girl. He knew that, having married her, his one chance to win her love would have been to embrace also as his creed of life these “Sunday school” theories which now seemed such simple, basic truths. It was, however, too late to think about that. He could never win her love, but he could give her freedom and she would hear enough of his life without her to know that he was striving to be the kind of a man she would have wished him to be.

With Regan resolution always had to hurry to keep action from treading on its heels. On the evening of the second day he told Davis to come down early the next morning and to see Mrs. Regan that night and request her please

to call on him "about the Fourth Ward mortgages." Then he busily prepared a few papers with his lawyer and went to bed.

It was the final surrender. He was no longer the fighting head of the band of spoilers that had looted the city. He would never be the Boss again. But in justice to his manhood—and he was a full-blooded man—it must be said that the iron bars across the windows of his room and the grave charge hanging over him did not influence his decision. A look of horror in a girl's eyes had broken him in a way that all the grim might of the law could never have done.

Davis arrived early the next morning. Among the other amusing fictions that the founders of the republic handed down to us is one which says that all men are equal before the law. The Inspector gave up his private room to Regan and allowed him to have his secretary at all hours of the day and see any visitors that he might select at any time of the day and night.

Regan spent the first hour dictating letters and telegrams to the grain companies in the West and to the Montreal contractors. When

he had finished Davis dropped his pencil on the desk and leaned back with a sigh.

"So that's the end of Montreal," he said softly.

Regan sat on a window-ledge and smoked. He made no comment and there was a long pause. At last he looked up.

"Davis?"

"Yes, sir."

"There's somethin' I want t' talk t' ye about. I won't be needin' a secretary much longer."

Davis made a quick gesture of protest.

"Please, sir—don't let's go into that now!"

"Why not?" demanded Regan. "We got to—sooner or later. I was sort o' goin' t' suggest that ye take an int'rest in the business."

"The business!" echoed Davis, with a stare of amazement.

"Yeah, my business," nodded Regan. "Ye've been with me eight years an' ye know it backwards an' I could hand it right over t' ye to-morrer. P'raps," with a sigh, "ye could run it better'n I did—I dunno. But, gee! I bet ye couldn't make it pay's well."

"Mr. Regan!" exclaimed the secretary, rising swiftly and walking over to him.

"Yeah?"

"Don't feel so discouraged! It's going to be all right! You're going to get out of here within a week and—"

"A week?" Regan laughed wearily. "I wonder!"

"Mr. Regan, you mustn't give up like this!" insisted the secretary, alarmed. "It's—it's not like you, sir, if you don't mind my saying so!"

"That's right," agreed the Boss, putting his hand affectionately on the young man's shoulder. "I dunno meself these days!"

"Brace up, sir!" urged Davis. "Pull yourself together—look on the bright side of it!"

Regan smiled drearily as he got up and walked over to sit on the bed.

"Aw, wot's the use?" He could not tell Davis why there could never be a bright side for him again. "Hodges was here after ye left last night."

"Hodges?" repeated the other eagerly. This was the Boss's counsel. "What did he say?"

"He says if Griswold dies I'll be indicted for murder in the first degree."

Davis snorted.

"Mr. Hodges missed his job. Lawyer! He

ought to have been a nursemaid. Why, Mr. Regan, there's more nerve in one of your back teeth than in two hundred Hodges!"

Regan went on in the same dull tone.

"He says th' District Attorney's workin' day an' night fer a conviction. They're goin' over me record with a fine-tooth comb—they're gettin' evidence from everywhere!" He gazed moodily at the floor.

Davis snorted again.

"Evidence! Let 'em get it! They can't prove you slung that brick and they can't prove you had it slung!"

"He says there's only one way to clear me-self," resumed Regan. "We've got to find the guy that done it an' make him swear he wasn't carryin' out my orders an'—"

"You never gave any orders!"

"I know," Regan nodded, grimly, "but I got t' prove it."

"Well, does Hodges think," Davis asked with unutterable scorn, "that that man is going to walk in here and say, 'Please, Mister, I slung that brick and if it isn't too much trouble, would you kindly electrocute me?' Is that what he's waiting for?"

The Boss shrugged his shoulders.

"Aw, gee! I dunno wot t' do!"

"Whoever he is, I bet by now he's half-way to Nevada. No, Mr. Regan, if you get out of here, it'll be without his help!"

"If I get out!" repeated Regan, bitterly.

"And you're going to! Do you hear that, Mr. Regan? You're going to!"

"All right, me son, all right," said Regan quietly. He glanced at his watch. "Half-past ten. Wot time are ye goin' to call fer Mrs. Regan?"

Davis was the secretary again.

"Quarter of eleven, sir."

"Ye'd better be hustlin' then."

The secretary picked up his hat and overcoat.

"Don't worry, sir, I'll be there."

Regan rose hurriedly and, stooping over the desk, pretended to be searching for something among the piles of papers. He cleared his throat nervously.

"Say—Davis!"

"Yes, sir."

"D' ye happen to remember," asked Regan, timidly, "wot she said—last night when—ye gave her my message?"

"Why," Davis hesitated, "she—seemed surprised."

"Yeah? And then?" He looked up eagerly.

"She asked why you had to see her. I said just what you told me to say: that it was important business connected with the Fourth Ward mortgages. She seemed doubtful for a minute and then she said she'd come. That's all."

"An' ye asked after her brother—ye didn't ferget that?"

"No. She said his condition hadn't changed—that it wouldn't till after the operation."

Regan turned quickly away. A nervous tremor ran through him.

"An' Jameson was a-goin' to operate this mornin'!" he muttered.

There was a knock at the door and a policeman put his head in.

"Porky McCoy's downstairs. He wants to see you," he said.

"McCoy?" echoed the Boss eagerly. "Send him along!"

"All right, sir." The head disappeared



and Regan turned almost joyously to his secretary.

"It's Porky! D' ye hear?" he cried. "He's stuck by me—I knew he wouldn't welch like all the rest!"

"I'll start right along then." Davis hurried out.

A few moments later there was another knock on the door.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### PORKY MUTINIES

“‘**C**OME on in, Porky!” exclaimed the Boss, his face lighting up with pleasure. He seized his lieutenant’s timidly extended hand and pulled him into the room. “Gee, man! I’m glad t’ see ye! How’s the wife an’—?”

He broke off suddenly. Porky did not meet his frank gaze of welcome. His face was pale, his manner nervous and reserved.

“Huh! Wot’s th’ matter?” demanded Regan.

Porky stared back for a moment and then turned his head and gazed fixedly at the wall.

“Nothin’,” he said. His voice was low and half-surly.

“Have a cigar?” suggested the Boss, studying the other’s face with a mixture of puzzlement and uneasiness.

“Naw.”

“A drink?”

“Naw.”

Regan came a little closer. "Say, Porky, ye ain't sore at me, are ye?" he inquired anxiously. Porky started and turned.

"Sore at ye? Oh, Mike—" His voice broke.

"Porky, ye got somethin' on yer mind," said the other, slowly. "Now, go ahead an' lay it out, me son!"

McCoy gulped and twice opened his mouth without making a sound. There were tears in his eyes.

"Mike, I never knew they'd think you did fer Griswold!" he blurted out at last. "Gee! Ye could ha' knocked me wid a feather when I heard they'd pulled ye in!"

"I know that, me son—I know that!" Regan nodded gravely.

"I didn't mean to play ye dirty, Mike!" went on Porky, a little wildly. "Honest I didn't! I didn't mean to go back on ye—I wouldn't go back on ye fer anythin' in th' world!"

"O' course ye wouldn't, Porky—I know that!" interrupted Regan soothingly.

"But I been readin' th' papers an' hearin' folks talk an' sayin' what a good case they made out against ye, Mike—an' when Larry

Dugan come in an' showed me wot that damn District Attorney had in this evenin's *Post*, I—I went int' th' kitchen where my wife was nursin' the kid an' I begun bawlin'—an' she got scared—an' I told her th' whole thing!"

"Ye told her!"

"Yeah! An' when I finished she said ye'd been a good friend to me, Mike, an' it was up t' me an'—an' she got my overcoat—so—here I am, Mike—an' I guess that's all!"

He hurriedly ran his coat-sleeve across his eyes and straightened up with a quivering breath of relief. Regan placed one hand on Porky's arm and gently patted a shoulder with the other.

"Ye poor feller! Ye poor feller!" he murmured.

McCoy squirmed with internal agony.

"Aw, don't!" he gasped. "Smash me—kick me! Beat me t' pieces—I won't say nothin'! But don't—be good t' me, Mike—I can't stand it!—I can't—I *can't*!"

He crumpled into a chair and sank over the desk, shaking with sobs. Regan looked down at him in pity and let him weep in silence for a few moments. Then the Boss put his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Say, Porky," he said gently, "d'ye remember one night in my old bar at th' head o' th' Alley?—Gee! It's fifteen years ago now!—An' ye stood up with me when Kelly's gang come in t' murder me fer takin' th' ward away from him? It was us two against eight. But we got behind th' bar, an' ye grabbed the beer-mallet, an' I broke two bottles o' Canadian rye over Kelly's head before I laid him out. Gee! That was a swell scrap! An' then when 'twas all over ye remember my comin' up t' ye where ye was leanin' against th' back-bar, tryin' to wipe the blood off yer chin, an' my sayin', 'Porky,' says I, 'ye've done me a good turn t' night an' p'raps some time I'll have a chance t' pay ye back. But, anyway,' I says, 'from this time on, s' help me Gawd, there won't be nothin' come between us two. They don't make nothin' thin enough fer that!'"

The sobs had ceased and McCoy raised his tear-damp face.

"Well, that chance I talked about," went on Regan, almost tenderly, "it's been fifteen years a-comin', Porky, but I've got it now, an'—I guess I'll hang right on!"

"Wot—do ye mean?" demanded Porky, failing utterly to comprehend.

Regan slapped him joyously on the shoulder.

"Well, ye go straight home an' tell th' missus an' the kid it's all right! Mike Regan says it's all right!"

"But, Mike, I done it!" protested the other.

"Ye did not, Porky. The man that done it skipped an' we can't find him. See?"

But Porky did not see. He had been so accustomed to seeing others sacrificed for the Boss and would have been so willing to sacrifice himself just as readily that he was incapable of understanding this new Regan.

"Mike!—I ain't skipped!—I'm right here—I'm willin' t' pay up!"

"Aw, come off!" interrupted Regan with a smile. "Ye don't know nothin' about it—nothin', nothin' at all!"

At last Porky grasped it.

"Mike!" he gasped. "Ye'r tryin' t' let me off!"

Regan's smile broadened.

"Gee! Porky, but ye'r' wise to-day!"

"But, say," protested Porky, "d'ye know wot'll happen to you?"

Regan waved his hand carelessly.

"Now, don't ye bother yer nut about me. I'll get out o' here!"

"Ye won't!" cried Porky, coming toward him excitedly. "If Griswold croaks this town'll finish ye good—understand? It won't lie back till it's buried ye in quick-lime!"

"Well, p'raps ye think I care!" interrupted Regan in a harsh voice. "P'raps ye think I got a lot to live fer? Well, if ye do ye'r' off—way off—miles off!"

"But yer wifel!"

"My wifel!" All the bitterness of his sentence of loneliness swept back over him. "I ain't got one!"

"But yer kids!" insisted Porky, feverishly. "The fam'ly that's comin' t' ye!"

"Fam'ly!" echoed Regan, and he laughed mirthlessly.

"But—yer business, Mike!" The habit of dying for his chief was strong in McCoy. "That's there! Ye got that t' look out fer!"

"Quit it!" Regan burst out with a snarl. "I'm sick o' th' bus'ness—I hate it! I wish t' Gawd I'd never seen it! Damn th' business, that's wot I say! Damn it! Damn it!"

His voice rose with each oath and Porky shrank back, half-afraid. "I didn't mean nothin'," he protested hastily. The Boss quickly regained his self-control.

"That's all right, Porky. I'm sort o' done up t'day. But now ye see how I ain't got nothin' t' live fer. An' remember! You got everythin'—everythin' a man c'n have! So—go home now an' tell th' wife. She'll be waitin' an' worryin'—an' ye ought t' let her know."

"But, Mike, I—"

"Wotever ye did, Porky, ye did it as my man!" interrupted the Boss with an air of finality. "Ye did it fer me—understand? An' as head o' th' firm, I guess I stand responsible fer me employees!"

While McCoy was still blinking with the mental effort of trying to grasp the logic of this reasoning Regan took out his pocket-book and inquired in a new tone:

"Say, Porky, wot day did ye say th' christenin' was?"

"Christenin'?"

"Yeah." Regan smiled. "Michael Regan Ignatius McCoy!"

"It's Sunday week, but—" began Porky, dazed by the sudden shift in the conversation.

"Well, you take this an' get the boy a present," interrupted Regan, putting a bill of a considerable figure in McCoy's hand. "One o' them silver mugs is th' reg'lar thing—an' if



there's anythin' left over, just set up th' drinks fer the crowd."

McCoy attempted to protest, but the Boss silenced him.

"Aw, rats! G'wan an' take it!" He moved away and went on in a lower voice: "An' tell th' good woman I'm—I'm awful sorry I can't be at th' church meself that day to hold the kid. Ye know I was—kind o' lookin' forward t' that, somehow, but—" He paused, embarrassed.

And then Porky remembered something "th' good woman" had told him.

"Mike!—I won't let ye do this!" he burst out. "I did fer Griswold!—it was my fault!—an' now it's up t' me!"

"Aw, shut yer face!" snapped Regan.

"I won't! I'm goin' straight downstairs an' tell 'em how it happened an'—"

"You dry up or I'll bust yer jaw!" roared the Boss, leaping at him. "Ye'll tell 'em downstairs, will ye?" He thrust his heavy chin out. "Ye'll tell 'em nothin'! D' ye hear? Ye'll walk out o' this place without openin' yer mug wide enough t' spit!—an' ye'll do it because I tell ye to, by Gawd! There ain't no bigger reason! . . . Come in!" he snarled, as

there was a rap at the door. "Wot d' ye want?"

A policeman put his head inside.

"There's a lady to see ye, sir."

Regan eyed him with distrust.

"'Tain't another o' them female reporters?" he demanded suspiciously.

"No, sir. It's yer wife. She's down in th' Inspector's office."

"All right—I'm ready. Tell her to' come up."

As the policeman retired Regan turned to McCoy and held out his hand. Porky's met it in a strong grip. For half-a-dozen seconds they looked into each other's eyes in silence.

"S'long"—shakily.

"S'long, Porky"—gruffly.

Porky gulped, turned away and walked unsteadily to the door.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE BEGINNING

**D**ONALD GRISWOLD was out of danger. At half-past nine Emily learned from the surgeons that the operation had been successfully performed and that within a few weeks he would be as well and strong as ever. She was even permitted to see him.

Her heart bubbled over with joy and thanksgiving, and there was room there for a divine pity for the man she was to see that morning. Nothing mattered now that Don was out of danger, but she remembered with quick contrition her husband's despairing appeal to her to believe that he had not caused her brother's misfortune. As she recalled his tones and his anguish she felt that she had wronged him. Well, she would be the bearer of good tidings to him and make amends by so much, at least.

She approached the open door so softly that he did not hear her. She looked at him and her eyes filled with pitying tears. He was

putting the last finishing touches to the room. He had covered the relics of his breakfast with a napkin, brushed cigar ends and ashes into the cuspidor, and hid that article behind the wash-stand. Then he washed his face and hands and hid his pajamas under the pillow. He was just covering the red blankets with a counterpane when she appeared in the doorway.

"Michael!" she called softly. He started up and turned.

"Oh—is—that you?" he stammered in confusion. "I—I didn't hear ye."

She moved slowly into the room.

"They said to go right in," she apologized. With another quick twinge of pity she noticed the scars of his two days' pilgrimage through the Valley in the lines of his face.

"Sure—o' course!" he agreed hastily, more embarrassed. "Won't ye—sit down?"

He indicated a chair and she sank into it with a murmured, "Thank you!"

There was another awkward pause.

"I—I hope ye'r' feelin' well?" suggested Regan timidly.

"Oh, I'm well enough," replied the girl, "but—rather tired, that's all." She gave him a little smile which put him more at ease.

"I know," he nodded, sympathetically. There was another pause.

"Ye'r' lookin'—"

"You look—"

"I beg yer pardon!" stammered the Boss, hastily. "After you!"

"You look—fairly comfortable here. Somehow—" she hesitated—"I didn't expect to find things as—as comfortable."

Regan glanced about the room with some embarrassment.

"Yeah, they've been real good t' me—the boys have. Davis comes here ev'ry day an'—I've got a telephone in th' hall, an'—I get my grub sent in from that hotel across th' street. No, it ain't so bad when—when—ye get used to it."

There was another silence. Emily thought he was more like "the little boy" she had known eight months ago than she had ever seen him.

"Mr. Davis said you wanted to see me about those Fourth Ward mortgages," she suggested nervously.

He nodded and turned his gaze away from her.

"Yeah. I want t' make an assignment. I

want to deed 'em over t' you—if ye don't mind," he said slowly.

Emily opened her eyes wide.

"Deed them over to me! What 'do you mean?"

"Put 'em in yer name," he explained, still not looking at her. "Let ye work 'em the way ye want—give 'em to ye. Understand?"

Emily gasped.

"But—I thought you were going to fore-close!"

He turned his back to her and stared out the window into the street.

"I—changed me mind," he said slowly.

"Changed your mind!" echoed Emily with growing amazement. "Why?"

"I dunno." Another silence and he went on with difficulty, still speaking to the window. "When ye'r' up against it—th' way I am now—ye sort o' feel like squarin' ev'rythin' up. An' I thought, seein' ye was so int'rested in them folks down there, ye'd like t' keep an eye on 'em an' keep 'em out o' trouble. They're just like kids, ye know—they need lookin' after."

She dropped her eyes that he might not see the tears in them as he turned back to the desk.

"Oh, Michael!" she exclaimed, softly. He glanced at her.

"Will ye do it, then?"

"Yes, I'll do it," she replied slowly, "if you want me to."

"All right!" he declared briskly. "I had Hodges frame up an acceptance of th' assignment. Will ye look at it? It's short, ye see, but it covers the ground." He handed her the slip of paper he had taken out of an envelope and watched her as she glanced over it. He gazed at her bent head until he grew anxious.

"Is there anythin' ye don't understand?" he asked. "I know them legal words is apt t' mix a lady up."

She passed the paper back to him and turned away to touch her eyes with her handkerchief.

"No. It's—it's quite—clear," she answered, unsteadily. "Quite!"

"Then would ye mind signin' it now?" he suggested, cheerfully. "An' I'll give it t' Hodges in th' mornin'."

"Where—do I sign?" she asked, turning to him once more. He indicated the place and handed her a pen. She bent over the desk and

wrote "Emily G. Regan" under his name. He winced slightly.

"There!" he exclaimed with a heartiness that was pitifully transparent. "Ye'r' th' Boss now—ye'r' th' Boss o' th' Fourt' Ward. P'raps," he added in a lower tone, "ye'll be a better one than me!"

The girl sank back with her head bowed.

"Thank you, Michael," she said, simply. There was another pause. He waved the paper to and fro to dry the signature.

"I—I suppose you'll be going to Montreal very soon?" she suggested, timidly, looking up at him. He turned quickly away.

"Naw!"

She started with surprise.

"Why not?"

"Look at them bars," he said, with a grim nod toward the window. "Ain't they a good reason?"

"But, Michael—?"

"I might as well tell ye right now—I don't stand much show o' gettin' out o' here."

"You mean—on account of Don?"

"Yeah."

"Then you don't know—of course, you don't!" She rose quickly.



"Know what?"

"That it's all right—that he's going to get well!"

Regan wheeled about with a gasp of incredulous joy.

"Naw!" he shouted.

"That's what Dr. Jameson said!" she exclaimed eagerly. "He operated at half-past seven!"

"To-day?"

"And Don knew me before I left the hospital!" she concluded.

Regan threw both arms above his head. His face was transfigured with joy.

"Oh, gee! I'm glad!" he shouted.

She watched him with a curious look.

"Yes, it means a lot to you, too—doesn't it?"

Instantly his expression changed. His figure seemed to shrink.

"Well, I—I wasn't thinkin' o' meself—just then," he said shyly, turning away from her.

She did not look at him.

"So you can probably—go north after all?"

"Yeah," he said after a pause. "I suppose—I can." He picked up a packet of neatly folded papers and gazed at it thoughtfully.

"I s'pose I can," he repeated, slowly. "But—somehow—I guess I won't."

Carefully and methodically he tore the papers across again and again and dropped the pieces in the waste-basket.

She watched him, puzzled.

"Michael, what—what are you doing?"

"My contracts with Montreal—or wot's left of 'em." He strolled over to the window and gazed out.

The girl spoke softly. There was a tumult in her bosom that she did not understand.

"You're giving that up, too?"

"It looks that way."

"But why? You don't have to."

She did not see him wince as he turned back into the room and sank wearily into a chair.

"Can't I do a decent thing sometimes—iest fer th' fun of it?" he demanded bitterly.

"You don't mean—!" she gasped and took a step toward him. "You don't mean you're doing it for yourself?"

"Well, I ain't doin' it for anybody else, am I?" he growled.

In the little silence that followed he could hear her breathing.

"Michael! I—I sided against you yester-

day," she quavered. Now she moved slowly over to him. "You'd done so many dreadful things! And I knew how you felt about Don. When you told me, it all seemed so to go together—I couldn't think—!"

"Don't begin on that again!" he broke in desperately. "Please!"

"But now—" she went on without heeding him. "Michael, look at me!"

He raised his head and her hand fell lightly on his shoulder.

"It's all right—I'm sure now. I know you didn't do it!"

He sprang up with a gasp, pushing her almost rudely away.

"Ye—don't mean—ye believe me!"

"Yes, and—oh, Michael!" She took his hand. "You've got to forgive me for not believing you before!"

He turned his face away, winking hard.

"Quit it! Don't!" he implored; and she could feel his muscles straining through the hand she held.

"But I'll make up for it! And now we're going to turn our backs on everything that's happened—you and I!"

But then Regan remembered the result of

his two days of hard thinking. He drew a deep breath.

"Thank ye," he said, steadily. "Thank ye, kindly. I know ye'r' jest sayin' that t' make things easy fer me, but I'm—I'm awfully obliged t' ye, all th' same."

"I'm not, Michael! I—"

But he did not heed her.

"Gee! I been sort o' seein' our finish comin' on fer the last six months an' now—all of a sudden—it's right here—an' somehow I c'n look it in th' face an' keep on smilin' jest th' same."

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Ye was right when ye said—that ye an' me have got t' start all over again. Only this time—we got to start alone!

"Now, wait a second, Emily! I guess we needn't bother much—now we're at th' end. If anybody could ha' pulled this off—why, we'd ha' been the ones. But we didn't have no show. We was all wrong, dead wrong—from the very beginnin'!"

"Was it—so wrong?" she asked, as if half to herself.

"Yeah!" he nodded emphatically. "I was wrong in thinkin' I could ever make ye happy

an' you was wrong—well, in thinkin' ye could ever let me try. I guess 'twas my fault, mostly. You was doin' it fer a bunch o' scoopers, an' I was out fer meself—like I always been. I might ha' known there couldn't be nothin' between us two—a guy<sup>s</sup> born in a back room over a bar an' a lady like yerself!"

"Don't! Please 'don't!" she interrupted, brokenly.

"D' ye know one thing I learnt from bein' with ye this way?" There was a deep note of tenderness in his voice. "An', gee! I don't see just wot good it's ever goin' t' do me!—Folks have to love each other awful hard before they c'n get married," he said slowly. "An' if you an' me had done that—why, we could ha' stood right up an' looked th' world square in th' eye! But as it is—!" He choked and dropped her hand.

"Michael!"

"It's all right!" He waved his arm carelessly. "The bill's paid, th' account's closed—an' if there's any fergivin' to be done I guess I need my share!—I hope," he went on in a shaky voice, "I hope Gawd gives ye everythin' ye couldn't get from me! An' that ye live

happy—an' grow old slow—an'—so good luck t' ye now, me darlin'! Good luck t' ye—an' good-bye!"

He turned hastily to the window and gazed out. There was a long silence. He seemed to be waiting for her to go. The girl was crying softly. She dried her eyes quickly and tried to look composed as there was a knock on the door and Inspector Kelly stepped in.

"Mr. Regan?"

The Boss did not turn his head.

"Well?"

"That man, McCoy—"

Regan wheeled sharply.

"Uh?" he exclaimed.

The Inspector's face was shining with excitement.

"It's all right, sir!" he declared, with a joyous look from one to the other, as befitted the bearer of good news. "He let out the whole thing!"

Regan smothered something between an oath and a question. The Inspector went on happily.

"He went straight down to Judge Swain and made an affidavit. The Judge signed

an order for your release and you can leave us, Mr. Regan, any time you like!"

"Porky!" muttered the Boss.

Emily started toward the policeman.

"He did it, then?" she exclaimed in a low voice. The Inspector nodded and smiled.

Emily's mind was awlirl and there was a strange roaring in her ears. But her eyes were shining when she raised them to the policeman.

"Will you please call my chauffeur?" she said in a low, gentle voice. "I—I'm going to take my husband home."

The Inspector backed out with a bow. Regan started at her words and she half-raised her arms.

Their eyes met.

And the Boss, with his hand in the girl's, passed out of the darkness of his prison into the first faint light of the new day that is old. In his wife's eyes he had seen that which brought back his faith in miracles. For he did not know that it was written long ago at the dawn of the soul that whosoever knows in his heart that he is unworthy of the love of woman has learned the beginning of worthiness.





1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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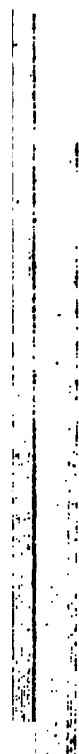
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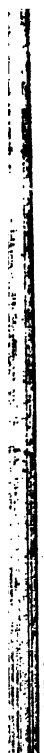
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